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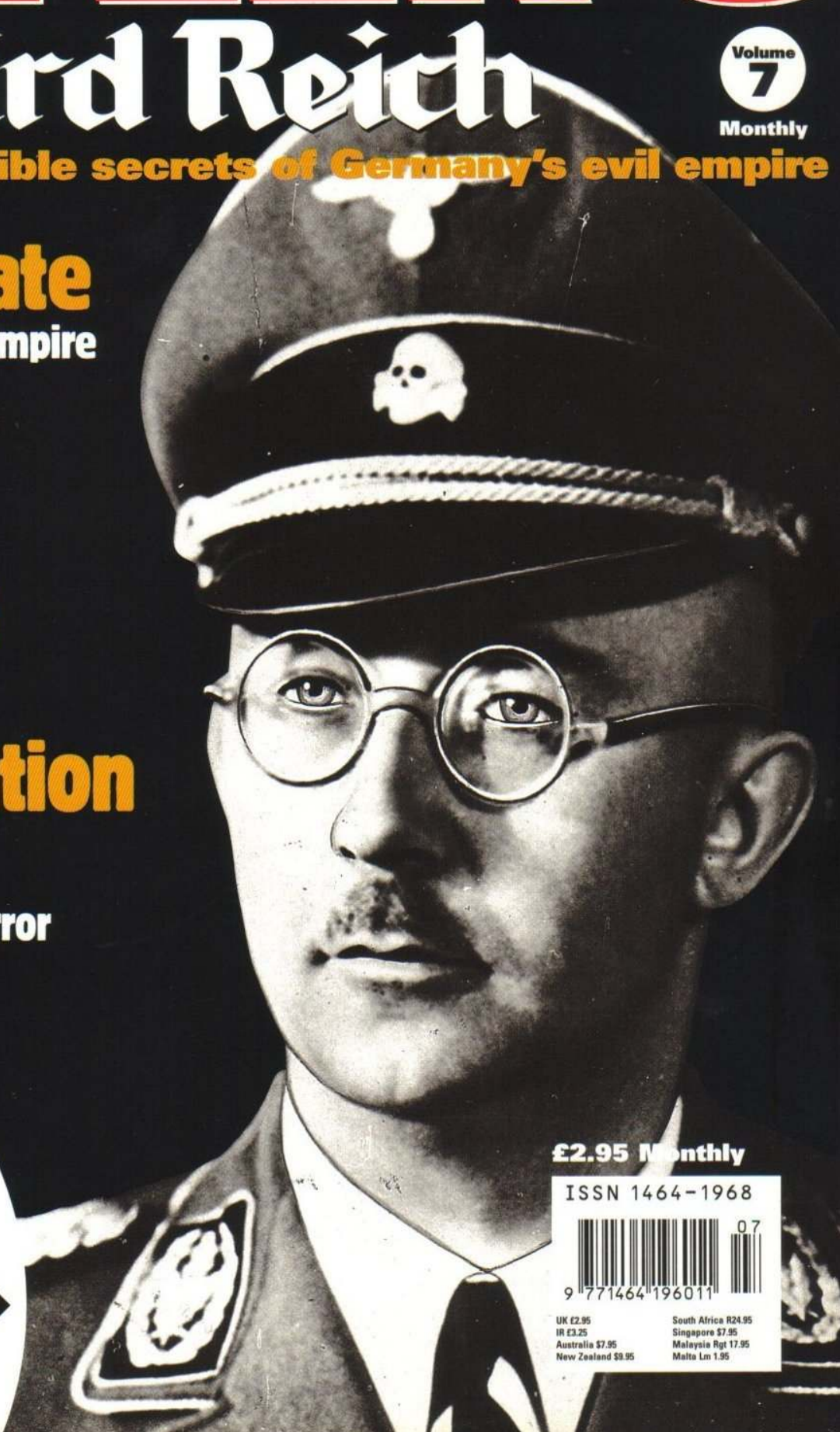
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HITLER'S Third Reich

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Hitler's Backers

According to Hitler, his was a lone struggle to reach power. But he could never have succeeded without the support of allies from all walks of German life.



THE GERMAN Communist Party (KPD) was in no doubt: Hitler was an empty vessel, a loud-mouthed tool of the industrialists, used by them to hammer the working class.

The more moderate Social Democrats (SPD) agreed. Since the war, left-wing writers have viewed him through the same Marxist prism. But was Hitler really helped to power by big business?

In the Robert Ludlum best-seller *The Scarlatti Inheritance*, Hitler is propelled into office by a conspiracy of international financiers. To the conspiracy theorists, Pope Pius XII is another possible ally: as Papal Nuncio in Germany from 1929-39 he is alleged to have channelled millions of Marks into Nazi funds. The army too had a vested interest in the Nazis – they were avowedly anti-Communist and preached bellicose nationalism just like the pre-1914 army league and pan-German movement.

Lonely leader?

Hitler himself said that he had no allies. Nazi legend would depict him as the lonely leader, struggling against titanic foes to deliver his message of German renewal until, by 'triumph of the will', he overcame all odds and the Nazi revolution began.

The truth was rather different, as Hitler had three types of ally inside Germany. First, there were the men responsible for

Left: Adolf Hitler poses with a number of leading Nazis in the years before he came to power. Included in their number are Hermann Goering, Heinrich Himmler, Joseph Goebbels and Wilhelm Frick.

Below: The early Nazi party was given a certain legitimacy by the active support of World War I commander General Erich Ludendorff.





Above: Members of the 'Soldiers' council' on the streets in Berlin in 1919 raised the spectre of Communist takeover, unwittingly paving the way for the extreme right to gain support.

running the Nazi Party from 1920-23, who rescued it after Hitler's failed putsch and who developed the organisation into a national political force – albeit on the fringe – by the time the Depression struck in 1929. Second, there were individuals and factions that assisted the Party at critical moments, from the aftermath of the putsch to the behind-the-scenes negotiations that ended in Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933. Third, there were the unintentional allies: men and organisations whose actions unwittingly aided Hitler. Ironically, the left-wing parties did a great deal to further the Nazi cause. At the other end of the political spectrum, what made President Hindenburg change his mind and hand power to the man he had once derided as 'the Bohemian corporal'?

High society

Among the ranks of the NSDAP, Hermann Goering was crucial in providing Hitler with an entrée into society, making contacts with potential sympathisers. Joseph Goebbels demonstrated a remarkable talent for agitation, taking on the Communists at their own game. Ernst Röhm nearly achieved his aim of creating a rival army to the *Reichswehr*, expanding the SA into a formidable paramilitary force. To Gregor

Right: Hitler is just one of a number of right-wing leaders taking the salute at a nationalist gathering in Nuremberg in 1923. As he gathered power he persuaded these rivals to support him – or eliminated them.

Strasser goes the credit for organizing the party across Germany, doing the real work of liaison and co-ordination. Hitler drew crowds to his speeches, but never did a day's work running the party after manoeuvring out the original leaders of the NSDAP.

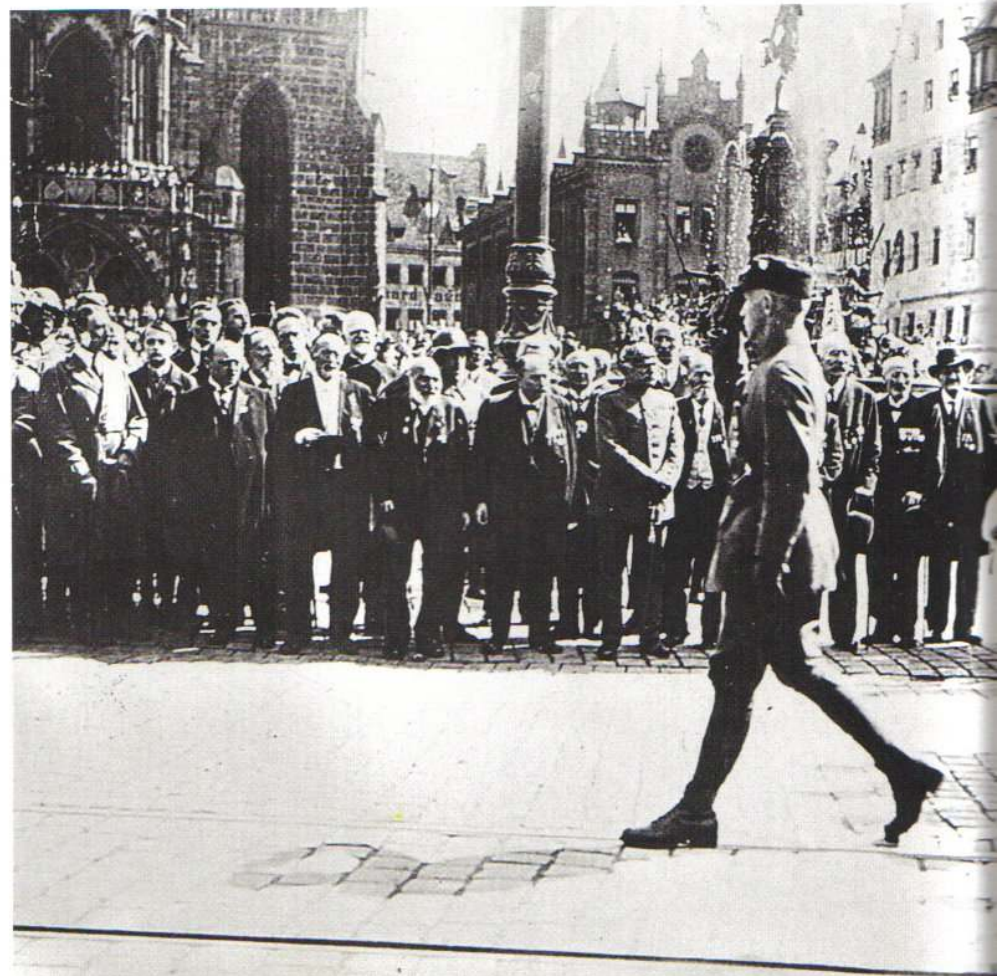
The accusation that Hitler was funded by German business did not come solely from

the KPD or post-war Marxist historians. Nazi press chief Otto Dietrich wrote of Hitler touring Germany, winning over men and women of all classes, including industrialists and bankers. And a handful of senior figures in German corporations did invest in Hitler. Their funds were coordinated by industrialist Wilhelm Keppler, who was rewarded with a succession of government posts after 1933, culminating in his appointment as state secretary for foreign affairs. (Convicted of war crimes in 1946 and serving two years of a ten year sentence, he died in 1960).

Industrial support

But although the 'Keppler Circle' contributed useful sums to the NSDAP, keeping Goering in the style to which he wanted to become accustomed, it did not amount to bankrolling the whole Nazi Party. The key member of Keppler's group was the president of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht, who backed Hitler from 1930 and was re-appointed by the Nazis after 1933. He was instrumental in persuading a number of Rhineland industrialists to contribute to NSDAP election expenses.

The Keppler Circle did intervene to some effect during the autumn political crisis of



1932. On 19 November President Hindenburg received a petition bearing the signatures of 20 business leaders, demanding he appoint Hitler as Chancellor. However, there was only one prominent industrialist on it: the steel and arms baron Fritz Thyssen. The rest were middle-ranking landholders and businessmen.

Even at the eleventh hour of the Weimar Republic, the majority of German industrialists, bankers and land-owners supported Hitler's rival von Papen. Although some made a contribution to the NSDAP, they did not – then – pour vast sums into Hitler's hands in the hope he would rule in their interest. In fact, they were simply spreading their money around for political insurance, and were making much larger payments to parties on the conservative right.

Unwitting allies

Hitler's unwitting allies included the two left-wing parties in the Reichstag. The Communist KPD was big enough to scare middle class voters, alarm business leaders and get the Reichswehr to play secret wargames to test strategies for dealing with a Communist revolution. Marching about Berlin in Soviet-style uniforms, the KPD made no secret of its allegiance to Moscow. But it was never strong enough to storm into office either through the



Hitler tours the Ruhr with general manager Voegler (far left) of the Vereinigte Stahlwerke (United Steelworks), together with major shareholder Fritz Thyssen (behind Hitler).

Nazi Party Paymasters

German industrialists played a major part in the rise of Adolf Hitler, not so much because they believed in his message but rather because they saw the Nazis as a means of getting rid of the hated Weimar Republic.

Although German industry was among the most powerful in Europe, it was organised into an almost feudal structure. Industrialists and their senior managers saw themselves as 'lords of the manor', demanding respect and obedience from their workers and treating them with paternalistic concern in return.

The idealistic Weimar constitution threatened that way of life by promising workers the opportunity to work for a reasonable wage as a right, rather than as a gift of the factory owners. Collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration in the case of disputes further alienated the big capitalists, and from the middle of the 1920s they worked to return to the old ways, trying to reduce wages and benefits to the detriment of organised labour.

Hitler began seriously to woo big business in 1931, and by 1932 he had started to win converts – in spite of the avowedly anti-capitalist stance of much of the Nazi leadership and party.

Dressed in a dark business suit and playing the part of a right-wing conservative, he convinced a number of senior industrialists and bankers that the Nazis were the only force able to counter the fast-rising Communists.

He was not immediately successful, but he had sown the seeds on fertile ground. By the end of 1932, many of the most prominent of Germany's millionaires were working behind the scenes, urging on Hitler's Chancellorship, and money was beginning to flow into the Nazi party's coffers.

In January 1933 the Nazi leader was appointed head of the executive branch of the government, and most leading industrialists, led by Gustav Krupp, pledged their full support to the Führer.

Above right: Fritz Thyssen was one of the first of Germany's big industrial magnates to support the Nazis, funding the party in the early years before the Munich putsch.

Right and below: Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach led Germany's largest industrial concern. Slow to support the Nazis, he was not fully on board until February 1933, but then made up for lost time. Krupp, with its heavy industry and armaments base, profited greatly from German re-armament.





HITLER AND THE CHURCH

The suggestion that the Catholic Church was Hitler's secret paymaster was first made in 1944. A US Army intelligence investigation noted the rapid expansion of the SA in the wake of the 1929 Depression. How, it speculated, had the Nazis managed to pay the the Brownshirts their daily wage of 1 mark and 25 pfennigs? The bill for the period 1930 to 1933 would have been equivalent to some \$93 million – rather more than Hitler earned in speech fees! However, the same report observed, the financial compensation paid to the Vatican by the Fascist government in Italy under the terms of the 1929 Lateran Treaty amounted to \$92.5 million – by implication saying that the Vatican had provided the funds. And only six months after taking office, Hitler signed a treaty with the Papacy, promising not to interfere in the

running of the Catholic Church in Germany and not to obstruct the public exercise of the Catholic religion.

It must be said that there is no evidence of Church support for the Nazis. Hitler's public declaration of tolerance requires no conspiracy theories. He was keenly aware of Catholic sensibilities, since the Nazi heartland had always been Catholic Bavaria. His declaration in 1933 cost him nothing and assuaged the anxieties of the Catholic Church: a body that, with heroic exceptions like Archbishop von Galen of Münster, would remain conspicuously mute on the subject of Nazi atrocities.

Even after the evidence of the Holocaust was revealed, the silence from the Holy See was deafening. As a result Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII, remains the most controversial pontiff in recent history.



Above: General Kurt von Schleicher and Franz von Papen made grave errors of judgement when they thought that they could control Hitler by inviting him into the government.

ballot box or through a Bolshevik uprising.

The Social Democrats (SPD) never resolved the contradiction in their name, let alone the problems of inter-war Germany. In any case, their platform of measures would only benefit the industrial proletariat. To the farm workers, the first to suffer in Germany's agrarian crisis that preceded the Depression, they had no answer. An urban-based party, they continued to prepare for what all good Marxists believed to be the inevitable (if distant) collapse of capitalism. Unable to see beyond their own dogma, the SPD was unwilling to get involved in government once the political crisis broke in 1930.

Ludendorff's warning

"This accursed man will cast our Reich into the abyss and bring our nation to inconceivable misery. Future generations will damn you in your grave for what you have done." So wrote former general Erich von Ludendorff to his former brother-in-arms, President Hindenburg, after he appointed Hitler Chancellor. It was a rare outburst of sense from the man who had enjoyed virtually dictatorial powers in 1917 and 1918 and who had marched with the Nazis in the 1923 putsch. By 1933, Ludendorff had lost all credibility, but Hindenburg had probably lost his senses. He was 86 years old and in poor health. Previously adamant that he would not grant Hitler the Chancellorship – certainly not without a parliamentary majority – the Field

Marshal relented on 30 January 1933.

The man who badgered Hindenburg into changing his mind was arguably Hitler's greatest ally – not that he knew it. Franz von Papen was appointed Chancellor in June 1932, but in the elections that November his coalition was exposed for what it was: a 'cabinet of barons'. It had little popular support and the Reichstag was dominated by parties dedicated to its destruction. Hindenburg reluctantly dismissed Papen's government on 3 December, and in the following weeks Germany's political future was decided behind closed doors. Papen made the most grotesque error of political judgement in modern history when he accepted the post of vice-chancellor in a Hitler cabinet, since he believed he and his

aristocratic supporters could manipulate Adolf Hitler.

It is recognised now that if Hitler had not been given power at that moment, the Nazi movement would have splintered, since the passions Hitler had aroused could not be sustained. His refusal to accept a cabinet position in 1932 led to a slump in the Nazi vote in November, with voters deserting a party that refused to take part in government. Cesare Borgia's motto 'Caesar or nothing' might also have been written for Hitler. Thanks to von Papen, Hitler's all-or-nothing policy paid off.



Right: As President of the Reichsbank, Hjalmar Schacht (seen here at Hitler's left) was a key Nazi supporter in the years leading up to the seizure of power.

Hitler, the Army & the Judges



President von Hindenburg talks to General von Seeckt in the 1920s. Although von Hindenburg despised Hitler, he was persuaded to appoint him Chancellor in 1933.



Above: The Reichswehr on exercise in the 1920s. One of the most powerful forces in German society, Hitler had to win the army's support.

Below: One thing that Hitler could offer the Generals when he came to power was re-armament and a major increase in the size of the army.



Two Weimar institutions became Hitler's allies. The judiciary demonstrated extraordinary bias in favour of right-wing extremists, ranging from SA men who killed opponents in street fights to Hitler's own farcical trial for the 1923 putsch. That set the standard: judge Georg Neithardt allowed his court room to become a political theatre. Hitler played to the gallery in the sure knowledge that half the Bavarian government had played at least a tacit role in his attempted coup. The sentences imposed for the violence of November 1923 – four policemen killed, SPD councilors held hostage, a newspaper office burned down and some 14 billion marks stolen – were so lenient that even other right-wing parties in Bavaria were embarrassed. The sentence even overlooked the fact that Hitler was still on parole for breach of the peace in 1922. Legally, he should have received a long jail sentence, or deportation, or both.

Political violence became ever more widespread between 1930 and 1933, and spilled over from the cities into small towns and villages. By 1932 Hitler could openly campaign against the murder

convictions of four SA men who had been caught red-handed in an especially savage murder of a Communist sympathiser. Their well-earned death sentences were commuted.

The Army

The Reichswehr was never Hitler's formal ally; the aristocratic officer corps looked down its long nose at the upstart former NCO. However, it regarded the Weimar Republic with equally lofty disdain.

The army wished to remain above the grubby business of party politics, reserving its loyalty to the higher concept of 'the Reich' or eternal Germany. Count Colmar von der Goltz spoke for a generation of blue-blooded generals when he wrote to General von Seeckt in 1924, offering to support him if the entente powers sought his resignation. The issue, he said, was whether the Reichswehr remained "a national and independent instrument standing above party for the entire Fatherland, or whether it deteriorates to the position of a soulless mercenary force in the hands of changing governments."

Plainly, parliamentary democracy was as much of an anathema to these would-be warlords as Bolshevism. The army wanted an authoritarian regime – and it got one in 1933. Arguably the Reichswehr's tragedy was that there were no generals with a Latin taste for direct intervention into politics: no would-be *caudillo* like Francisco Franco, ready to put tanks on the streets of Berlin. Most of the high command just stood aside, unwilling to save or overthrow the republic. Political activity was confined to that seedy intriguer General Kurt von Schleicher, whose mendacious manoeuvring split the conservative Right in late 1932.

Only later did the soldiers come to see the SA as a menace, recognising that if it came to a civil war, the Army could not guarantee Germany's borders while fighting Röhm's paramilitary legions.



RACE LAWS

LEGAL ANTISEMITISM

September 1935, and for the first time in four centuries, the Reichstag had been summoned to meet at Nuremberg. The Führer had an announcement.

THE LAWS Hitler announced at Nuremberg were intended to regulate anti-Semitism in Germany. By institutionalising racial discrimination, he hoped to satisfy the party hotheads and prevent further unauthorised street violence.

Uniformed stormtroopers and the more unruly grass-roots elements of the NSDAP wanted the 'Nazi revolution' and they wanted it immediately. At

horrifyingly frequent intervals, they would abduct and murder Jews or indulge in acts of violence in full public view. This is what Nazi leaders had preached for the last decade: Hitler had been Chancellor for over two years and the most rabid anti-Semites were not prepared to wait any longer.

The majority of the German public did not take part. Both Gestapo reports and the exiled social democrats' underground network (*sopade*) confirmed that anti-Semitic agitation and street

violence were going too far, and were undermining support for the Nazi regime. Exhortations to boycott Jewish-owned businesses were ignored by the bulk of the population. Their public failure was humiliating. The spectacle of SA thugs beating up helpless people (a typical ratio was 1,000 SA 'heroes' against 35 unarmed Jews) was roundly condemned.

ANTI-JEWISH FEELING

Public opinion objected to the methods, but not the intention of the antisemitic violence. Within the NSDAP demands grew for tough anti-Semitic legislation to accompany, but not replace, the bullying, intimidation and sectarian murder that were part of Nazi rule. Hitler's solution was to hand down a series of discriminatory laws that satisfied

his own movement and would enable him to rein in the 'old fighters'. Like so many of his decisions, it was made at the eleventh hour and left to others to sort out.

Dr Gerhard Wagner, sinister head of the Reich Doctors organisation, had advocated a ban on mixed Aryan/Jewish marriages for over a year. On 12 September he promised the assembly at Nuremberg a law to halt the 'bastardisation' of the *Volk*. The next night, Hitler summoned Dr Bernhard Lösener, in charge of preparing anti-Jewish legislation at the Ministry of the Interior. Lösener and a colleague, Dr Franz Medicus, reached Nuremberg on 14 September and were given 24 hours to draft a new law, banning mixed-race marriages.



Above: Much publicity was generated by the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses, but until it was backed by law the majority of the German people continued to use Jewish-owned shops.

The problem they faced was one that had been under consideration by committees of civil servants for some time. How do you define a Jew? Hermann Goering typified the prevailing attitude with his remark "Wer Jude ist, bestimme ich"—I decide who is a Jew. His chief assistant Erhard Milch was half-Jewish. Two Jewish women sheltered him after the 1923 putsch and he helped them to comfortable exile in Sweden at the same time as orchestrating brutal anti-Semitic action inside Germany.

CITIZENS DEFINED

Lösener and Medicus gave a first draft of their proposed measures to Reich Interior Minister Frick. A citizenship law was brought in to distinguish between 'subjects' (*Staatsangehörige*) and 'citizens' (*Reichsbürger*). Hitler announced the package on the evening of 15 September. Marriage between Jews and

Germans was outlawed. Sex outside marriage between Jews and Germans became a criminal offence. Jews were banned from employing German women under 45 as domestic servants. Jews were banned from flying the German flag.

After the party faithful had departed and the Reichstag left the city, the problem of legally defining a Jew remained. Hitler left it for the civil servants in the interior ministry and Rudolf Hess's office of the Nazi party to sort out. The horse-trading between the ideologues and officials exposed the lunacy of their policy for anyone who cared to see – it would have been funny if the consequences were not so horrific.

The civil servants argued that 'Jewish' meant having more than two Jewish (non-Aryan as

Right: Crude but vicious anti-Semitic propaganda was used to justify the discriminatory laws suffered by German Jews.



WHAT IS A REICH CITIZEN?

**The Reich Citizenship Law
15 September, 1935**

THE REICHSTAG has adopted by unanimous vote the following law which is herewith promulgated.

Article I

- 1 A subject of the state is one who belongs to the protective union of the German Reich, and who, therefore, has specific obligations to the Reich.
- 2 The status of subject is to be acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and the state Citizenship Law.

Article II

- 1 Only one of German or kindred blood may be a citizen of the Reich. He must, through his behaviour, show that he is

both desirous of and personally fit to serve the German people and the Reich.

- 2 The right to citizenship is obtained by the grant of Reich citizenship papers.
- 3 Only the citizen of the Reich may enjoy full political rights in accordance with the provisions of the laws.

Article III

The Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Führer's Deputy, will issue the necessary legal and administrative decrees for the implementation and amplification of this law.

*Promulgated: 16 September, 1935.
In force: 30 September, 1935.*

THE HOLOCAUST



Above: Viennese Jews are forced by SS men to clean the street with toothbrushes. Anti-Semitism was already strong in Austria but it was strengthened with the application of German law after the Anschluss.

Below: Before long, European Jews had to wear distinguishing Star of David badges. They were also compulsorily moved into ghettos.



they put it) grandparents. Hess's Nazi theorists thought a 'quarter-Jew' should count as Jewish. (It is odd how the advocates of 'white blood' value it so poorly in relation to that of so-called inferior races. In the southern states of the USA before the Civil War, having only one-eighth negro blood was enough to condemn you to slavery.)

The Reichsbank and the foreign ministry waded in on the side of the 'quarter-Jews', arguing that the continued uncertainty was harming foreign relations and the economy. Hitler demanded a decision, and in November the first supplementary decree to the citizenship law was finally promulgated. 'Half-Jews' (i.e. those with two Jewish and two

'Aryan' grandparents) were only counted as Jews if they were the child of a marriage to a Jew, practised the Jewish faith, were married to another Jew or were the illegitimate offspring of a German and a Jew. Goebbels wrote in his diary, "Quarter-Jews to us. Half-Jews only in exceptional circumstances."

MORE REPRESSION

The violence of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 once again appalled the majority of the German people. There was little public taste for an eastern European-style pogrom. Just as in 1935, the violence was followed by a round of new legislation, this time organised by Goering, Goebbels, Himmler and Heydrich. It amounted to more than apartheid: Jews were banned from cinemas, theatres and all places of entertainment. They lost their driving licences. Jewish children were banned from German schools. All professions were closed to Jews.

Nazi aims were made clearer to anyone who could not take the hint by the creation of the

Central Office for Jewish Emigration on 1 January 1939. Organised by Reinhard Heydrich there were offices in Berlin, Vienna and later Prague. It was made explicit to German embassies that the solution to the Jewish Question was emigration. Jews were not actually expelled. But life was made so awful for them, that more than half the 503,000 Jews in Germany (less than one per cent of the population) had left by the outbreak of war. Nazi greed was one limiting factor: Jews who emigrated had to leave all their possessions and property behind, but reluctance to abandon hard-earned money and family homes led many to stick it out. Nazi officials grew fat on the proceeds of those who did choose to go. By the time Nazi policy descended to its final, murderous level, it was too late for most of those who had stayed.

ANNIHILATION THREAT

In a Reichstag speech in January 1939, Hitler promised that if "Jewish international financiers" brought about another war, the result would "not be world Bolshevism, but the annihilation of the Jews in Europe". Were the Nuremberg laws the first premeditated step on the road to Auschwitz-Birkenau? The truth may never be known. If Hitler had not triggered a world war eight months later, Jewish emigration may have continued until nothing Jewish remained in Germany but their stolen property and their names on Imperial German war memorials.

As it was, the outbreak of war closed all avenues of escape for German Jews. Within a month, the Wehrmacht had conquered Poland, with the largest Jewish population of any country outside the USSR: nearly four million people. Further conquests added to 'the Jewish problem' until, by the time Heydrich called the infamous conference at Wannsee in January 1942, over 11 million Jews lived in countries now controlled by Hitler and his puppets.

CITIZENSHIP DENIED

Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, 15 September, 1935

THOROUGHLY CONVINCED by the knowledge that the purity of German blood is essential for the further existence of the German people and animated by the inflexible will to safeguard the German nation for the entire future, the Reichstag has resolved upon the following law unanimously, which is promulgated herewith:

Section 1

1 Marriages between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they are concluded abroad.

2 Proceedings for annulment may be initiated only by the Public Prosecutor.

Section 2

Relation outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden.

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female nationals of German or kindred blood in their households.

Section 4

1 Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to present the colours of the Reich.

2 On the other hand they are permitted to present the Jewish colours. Exercise of this authority is protected by the State.

Section 5

- 1 A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of section 1 will be punished with hard labour.
- 2 A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labour.
- 3 A person who acts contrary to the provisions of section 3 or 4 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and a fine or with one of these penalties.

Section 6

The Reich Minister of the Interior in collaboration with the Führer's Deputy will issue the legal and

administrative regulations which are required for the implementation of and supplements to this law.

Section 7

The law will become effective on the day after the promulgation, section 3 however only on 1 January, 1936.

Nuremberg, the 15th day of September 1935 at the Reich Party Rally of Freedom.

*The Führer and Reich Chancellor
Adolf Hitler*

*The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick*

*The Reich Minister of Justice
Dr. Goertner*

*The Deputy to the Führer
R. Hess*

First Supplementary Decree of 14 Nov., 1935

ON THE BASIS of Article III of the Reich Citizenship Law of September 15, 1935, the following is hereby decreed:

Article I

- 1 Until further provisions concerning citizenship papers, all subjects of German or kindred blood who possessed the right to vote in the Reichstag elections when the Citizenship Law came into effect, shall, for the present, possess the rights of Reich citizens. The same shall be true of those upon whom the Reich Minister of the Interior, in association with the Deputy Führer, shall confer citizenship.
- 2 The Reich Minister of the Interior, in conjunction with the Deputy Führer, may revoke citizenship.

Article II

- 1 The provisions of Article I shall apply also to subjects who are of mixed Jewish blood.
- 2 An individual of mixed Jewish blood is one who is descended

from one or two grandparents who, racially, were full Jews, insofar that he is not a Jew according to Section 2 of Article 5. Full-blooded Jewish grandparents are those who belonged to the Jewish religious community.

Article III

Only citizens of the Reich, as bearers of full political rights, can exercise the right of voting in political matters, and have the right to hold public office. The Reich Minister of the Interior, or any agency he empowers, can make exceptions during the transition period on the matter of holding public office. The measures do not apply to matters concerning religious organisations.

Article IV

- 1 A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote; he cannot hold public office.
- 2 Jewish officials will be retired as of December 31, 1935. In the

event that such officials served at the front in the World War either for Germany or her allies, they shall receive the full salary last received as pension, until they reach the age limit. They shall not, however, be promoted according to their seniority in rank. When they reach the age limit, their pension will be computed again, according to the salary last received on which their pension was to be calculated.

- 3 These provisions do not concern the affairs of religious organisations.
- 4 The conditions regarding service of teachers in public Jewish schools remains unchanged until the promulgation of new laws on the Jewish school system.

Article V

- 1 A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews.
- 2 A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full-Jewish grandparents if:
 - a) he was a member of the Jewish religious community

when this law was issued, or joined the community later;
b) when the law was issued, he was married to a person who was a Jew, or was subsequently married to a Jew;
c) he is the issue from a marriage with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, which was contracted after the coming into effect of the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour of September 15, 1935;
d) he is the issue of an extramarital relationship with a Jew, in the sense of Section I, and was born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936.

Article VI

(1) Insofar as there are, in the laws of the Reich or in the decrees of the National Socialist German Workers' Party and its affiliates, certain requirements for the purity of German blood which extend beyond Article 5, the same remain untouched.

Article VII

The Führer and Chancellor of the Reich is empowered to release anyone from the provisions of these administrative decrees.



THE STATE



In just ten years the SS grew from Hitler's bodyguard to become a Nazi colossus, forming secret state within the Third Reich.

THEY WERE the original 'Men in Black', the personification of the Nazi state. In their sombre uniforms adorned with swastikas and deaths heads, the members of the *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, cast threatening shadows over Germany in the 1930s, and they grew in power during the war. Offering the Führer loyalty to the death, SS members were totally committed to National Socialism, even after it became obvious that the Nazis were pulling Germany down into ruin.

By 1945 the *Waffen*, or armed SS was a million-strong private

army. When added to the control the 'Black Corps' already exerted through the state's security apparatus, the concentration and labour camps, and the organisation's vast economic interests, it is not surprising that Heinrich Himmler thought of his brainchild as a private state within a state, *Jenseits von Partei und Staat* – 'beyond Party and state'.

Although the SS is closely identified with Heinrich Himmler, the shape and form it took owed much to Adolf Hitler. It was he who formed the specially-selected bodyguard units which would evolve into

Above: The black-clad SS were always to the fore at great state occasions. Here Leibstandarte members carry the Feldzeichen or standards of the SA and the SS during the 1933 Nuremberg Rally.

the SS. It was Hitler who gave their sense of being chosen men. It was Hitler who selected men who took pride in doing anything he asked – whether it was legal or beyond the law.

But although Hitler gave the SS birth, it was Heinrich Himmler who provided the executive ability and gave it the structure to enable it to grow. Himmler was an *alte kamerad* – he had taken part in the Munich putsch in 1923 – but few who

TOTENKOPF STURMBANNE

EICKE'S THUGGISH GUARD CORPS



Left: Even in a state where brutal treatment of enemies was the norm, the SS camp guards had a particularly fearsome reputation.

Above: Totenkopf men hand out the soup ration at Dachau. The early camp guards set the tone for the horrors to come.

Although the *Totenkopf* or Death's Head units were an important part of the SS, they were very different from the ferociously disciplined members of the armed SS. Tasked with guarding and running Nazi concentration camps, the *Totenkopf-verbände* took pride in their total lack of military virtues.

The guards took their cue from one of their early commanders, Theodor Eicke.

Eicke, a psychopathic killer before being recruited by Himmler, had been a failure as a soldier and a policeman. As a result, Eicke hated professional army officers almost as much as he hated Marxists and Jews.

In his Death's Head guards – recruited from unemployed malcontents, embittered farmhands and simple thugs – Eicke found willing pupils for his brand of brutality.

saw this unprepossessing, bespectacled young man in his 20s could have guessed that he would rise to a position of almost unparalleled power, thanks to the SS.

Himmler became deputy leader of the SS in 1927, rising to *Reichsführer* in 1929. Almost immediately, he started moulding the organisation into a very different shape from that envisaged by the Führer.

The new *Reichsführer* had two main aims. First, he wanted to use the SS to protect the party. As part of the process he established a small intelligence section, which under Reinhard

Heydrich was to become the feared *Sicherheitsdienst* or SD. SS units from all over Germany were expected to forward reports on political opponents, as well as on groups such as Freemasons and Jews.

Perhaps more importantly, Himmler saw the SS as his "sworn community of superior men". It was a means for purifying the German race;

Right: By the time the Nazi Party came to power, the SS had won the allegiance of many key politicians by offering them 'honorary' membership. Here Franz Ritter von Epp, former war hero and Freikorps leader, wears a black SS uniform after seizing power in Bavaria in March 1933.





Above: The SS was the Party's standard bearer in more ways than one. Membership in the black-clad ranks was limited to those who could pass the demanding physical requirements, or who were deemed important enough for Himmler to offer an honorary membership. Either way the SS was seen as an elite.

a gene pool out of which the perfect Aryan could be produced. He tightened entry procedures considerably, providing strict health and fitness standards which new recruits had to meet. Indeed, he examined photos of applicants personally for any signs of Mongoloid, Negroid or Semitic features.

At this time the *Schutzstaffel* was but a small part of the SA, with whom it was not popular. Himmler's intelligence gathering operation also collected information from potential opposition within the party, and SS men were seen as toadying informers by their brown-shirted colleagues. Himmler seemed to accept his subservient position within the party's mass movement – though the groundwork was already being laid for the SS state to come.

The true growth of the SS state began after Hitler seized power in 1933. Himmler was appointed police chief in Bavaria, and he would use that position as a platform from which he could bring all German law enforcement agencies, both uniformed and plain-clothed, into the hands of the SS.

The Gestapo, formed in Prussia by Goering, remained independent for a while, but it was soon absorbed into the ever growing monster. The power of the SS was consolidated in June 1934, when Hitler used the blackshirts to destroy the leadership of the rival SA in the Night of the Long Knives.

Himmler also sought to increase the power of the SS by offering honorary membership to people of influence. By attracting

Waffen



The Party's Private Army



Above and above left: The Leibstandarte was used primarily as a ceremonial unit, as seen here. However, ceremonials were not its main function. From the start its members were trained in infantry skills by former officers from the German army, and it would prove to be one of the toughest fighting units in history.

The armed SS was established after Hitler came to power in 1933. It was designed to provide a politically reliable force to act as a counterbalance to the Wehrmacht. Initially it comprised the members of Hitler's bodyguard, the *Leibstandarte*, together with a number of *Politische Bereitschaften* or Political Emergency Squads whose primary function had been to use violent measures against party opponents. These became the *SS-Verfügungstruppe*, or SS-VT.

By the time of the Anschluss with Austria, the armed SS had grown dramatically. In addition to the 2,600 men of the *Leibstandarte*, there were three SS-VT *Standarten* or regiments derived from the *Politische Bereitschaften*. The three regiments were given the names *Deutschland*, *Germania*, and *Der Führer* and were trained and equipped as motorised infantry.

The three *Standarten* would become the nucleus of the SS-VT Division, which saw action in Poland and France. In 1940 the Division was renamed *Das Reich*, and it was joined by the *Totenkopf* division, formed around a nucleus of Theodore Eicke's camp guards.

Left: SS Tiger ace Michael Wittmann, one of the most successful tank commanders in history, talks with his crew in Normandy in 1944. By this time, the original SS armed units had evolved a long way from their motorised infantry origins: most were now heavy armoured divisions, part of a 30-division *Waffen-SS* which had a strength of nearly a million men.



Above: In its early days, the armed SS was an all-volunteer force with extremely high physical standards. Wartime expansion of the *Waffen-SS* meant that for the first time it had to actively canvass for volunteers.

Below: Originally looked on with some suspicion by the army, the *Waffen-SS* proved itself on the Eastern Front. SS fanaticism meant that its units fought with a sustained ferocity rarely matched in modern warfare.



SS and State Security

It was Himmler's control of the state's security apparatus which changed the ordinary German's respect for the SS into distrust and fear. Originally a small party organisation, the *Sicherheitsdienst* or SS security service grew to encompass all secret police functions.

Himmler had been appointed chief of the German police after Hitler's accession to power, and through the 1930s he worked to bring all security and law-enforcement organisations into the operational control of the SS. In 1939 the establishment of the Main State Security Office – the RSHA, or *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* – meant that he had succeeded.

It was said that Reinhard Heydrich, its leader, had incriminating evidence on virtually every German citizen in his voluminous files. Gathered by a huge network of informers, the information fed to the SD allowed the Nazis to nip any opposition movements in the bud.

The intelligence services were also responsible for the rounding up of Jews to be exterminated.



Above: Like a faithful dog, Treue Heinrich (loyal Heinrich) stands before his master at Nuremberg. Senior SS men are strongly in evidence, their proximity to the Führer indication their position in the Nazi hierarchy. SS men also guard the sacred Blutflagge.

prominent industrialists, academics, landowners and former military officers, Himmler allayed some of the population's fear of the Nazis. In the early days, at least, the SS was seen as more acceptable than other Nazi groups.

At the same time as the *Schutzstaffel* was winning friends and influencing people, the armed SS was coming into existence. There were two main armed groups, both originating in Hitler's strong-arm squads of the late 1920s. Hitler's bodyguard, the *Leibstandarte*, was the first unit of what would become the Waffen SS. Both Hitler and Himmler, neither of whom trusted the German generals, saw it as a military force personally loyal to the Führer, which he could use as a counterweight to the army.

Right: The identity card of Wilhelm Höche, a senior officer in the Gestapo. Himmler and the SS gained control of the Reich's security apparatus in the middle of the 1930s, and used that control to establish its position of power as a state within a state.

The other armed SS formations formed after 1933 were the *Totenkopfverbände*. These brutal units were created after the SS won a turf fight with the SA over who should be in control of the concentration camps. The first camps were being built almost as soon as the Nazis came to power, and at Dachau the *Totenkopf* guards evolved many of the systems and techniques by which the SS terrorised Europe.

Control of the camps gave Himmler access to a large pool of slave labour, which proved useful in the growth of SS



industrial power. Himmler wanted the SS to be economically independent, and from the start he encouraged SS business.

Under the leadership of Oswald Pohl, the SS would eventually control one of Germany's largest industrial concerns. SS companies produced everything from building materials and textiles to porcelain and mineral water. They used camp labour for a variety of tasks, from large-scale baking to producing iron and steel goods.

SS control of the camps meant that it was primarily responsible for the implementation of the 'Final Solution', which it did with gusto. Given the crackpot racial theories which permeated the upper reaches of the SS, the genocidal murder of millions of Jews was seen simply as a means of purifying the Aryan race.

It was that dreadful crime above all others which showed the SS in its true colours. The Holocaust which the SS ignited was to bring retribution down on all of its members after the Germany's final defeat.



ORGANISATION 1943-1944

Hauptamt VoMi

(Volksdeutsch Mittelstelle -
Ethnic German Liaison Department)

SS Obergruppenführer Wernher Lorenz

Resettlement organisation and technical
assistance
German Race department

Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt

*SS Obergruppenführer Richard
Hildebrandt*

Racial Purity
Marriage permits

SS-Personalhauptamt

SS Personnel Office

*SS Obergruppenführer
Maximilian von Herff*

Personnel records
Officer records

Reichskommissar für die Festigung Deutschen Volkstums

Staff office of the Reich Commissar for
strengthening Germanness

*SS Obergruppenführer
Ulrich Greifelt*

Resettlement planning and execution

Reichsführer SS und Chef der Deutsches Polizei Heinrich Himmler



Reichsführer SS

Personal staff of the Reichsführer

*SS Obergruppenführer und General der
Waffen-SS Karl Wolff*

Ahnenerbe - SS Ancestral Heritage

*Lebensborn - SS maternity/breeding
programme*

SS-Hauptamt

SS Main Office

SS Obergruppenführer Gottlieb Berger

SS Registration Office
Waffen-SS replacement personnel

Heissmeyeramt

*SS Obergruppenführer
August Heissmeyer*

Political education
SS Schools

Wirtschaft- und Verwaltungshauptamt

WVHA - Main economics and
Administration Office

SS Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl

Concentration camps
Buildings
SS-Economic interests
Military administration
Waffen-SS supplies

Hauptamt SS-Gericht

SS Legal Office

SS Obergruppenführer Franz Breithaupt

SS and police courts

Reichssicherheitshauptamt

RSHA - Main State Security Office

*SS Obergruppenführer
Reinhard Heydrich, succeeded in 1943
by Ernst Kaltenbrunner*

Inland-SD (German intelligence)
SS-Brigadeführer Ohlendorf

Ausland-SD (Foreign intelligence)
SS-Brigadeführer Schellenberg

Gestapo (Secret police)
SS-Gruppenführer Müller

Kripo (Criminal police)
SS-Gruppenführer Nebe, succeeded in
1943 by SS-Gruppenführer Panziger

Personnel and training

Ideological research

Budget and administration

SS-Führungshauptamt

SS Operations department

*SS Obergruppenführer
und General der Waffen-SS Hans Jüttner*

Kommandoamt Allgemeine SS
General SS command
Kommandoamt der Waffen SS
Armed SS command

Waffen SS units
SS-Totenkopf Sturmabteilung

Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei

Uniformed Police

*SS Obergruppenführer und
Generaloberst der Polizei Kurt Dalwege*

Kommandoamt
(Uniformed police headquarters)

Colonial policing

Fire services

Emergency and civil defence organisations



Concentration

Network of oppression and death

In ten years the Nazi concentration camp system expanded to number more than 1,100 sites all over Europe.

16 HITLER'S THIRD REICH

IF YOU BYPASS the photo display at the entrance, there is nothing much to see at Bergen-Belsen.

Heathers ripple in the breeze, carpeting the sandy soil and the concrete rectangles that were once the foundations for regimented lines of wooden huts. It is said that no birds will settle here, but there are few trees, so the absence of birdsong may be less to do with the evil of man than with the natural habitat.

There is none of the sinister atmosphere at the giant bone cemetery on the battlefield of

Verdun; none of the chilling imagery of Auschwitz, where the rusty rail lines still scar the landscape and the hideous legend, *Arbeit Macht Frei* is incorporated into the ironwork gates; no visceral suggestion that this was once Hell on Earth.

Yet in 1945, when Bergen-Belsen was captured by the British army, the scenes there defied belief. Hardened soldiers, who had witnessed the most hideous sights on battlefields from El Alamein to D-Day, were physically sick. Inside the barbed wire perimeter were thousands of skeletal figures, barely



THE FIRST CAMPS

Enemies of the State



Above: The first batch of political prisoners, having been rounded up by the SA and the SS, are marched to the camp at Oranienburg outside Berlin. Most of these men are political opponents of the Nazis.

Although a number of informal Nazi detention centres were set up the moment Hitler came to power, the first true concentration camps were established at Dachau outside Munich and Oranienburg north of Berlin. Dachau was run by the SS and Oranienburg was initially an SA facility. However, they were filled in much the same way. Right-wing thugs from the SA and Stahlhelm organisations were drafted as 'auxiliary police' and let loose on political opponents of the

Nazis. These included socialists, Communists, Social Democrats, reporters, newspaper editors, anti-Nazi writers, and Jews. They were rounded up and placed in 'protective custody' in the camps, where they were humiliated, tortured and in some cases murdered. Anyone who protested at the brutality were themselves sent to the camps, where, if anything, they were treated worse than the other camp inmates.



Above: The fate of all too many victims of Nazi oppression: having lost all hope, this prisoner has deliberately crossed the deadline around his camp and has been shot by the camp guards.

their power, what went on in Hitler's concentration camps was a state secret.

The name 'concentration camp' is now so closely linked with Hitler's Third Reich that only in South Africa is its origin still bitterly remembered. During the Boer War (1899–1902) the British Army 'concentrated' – herded – the families of the Boer guerrilla fighters into improvised camps, preventing them from

recognisable as humans. Most were suffering from dysentery, if not typhus; many would be dead within the week. The survivors were relieved of their lice-ridden prison uniforms, which were incinerated; engineers in gas masks bulldozed piles of dead bodies into mass graves before burning the camp to the ground with flame-throwers.

Ironically, the Nazis had planned to do just the same to Belsen themselves; only the rapid collapse of the Reich prevented them from murdering the survivors and disposing of the evidence. Even at the height of



Left and below: Propaganda pictures of the prisoners in Oranienburg implied that conditions were good in the camp. In fact, discipline was brutal, and many prisoners who entered its gates were never seen again.





supplying food and shelter to the elusive enemy 'commandos'. Poor hygiene, bad administration and the children's lack of prior exposure to childhood diseases led to horrific death rates. More than 25 per cent of the Boer inmates died. The camps broke the back of Afrikaner resistance, but they also poisoned relations between the English and Boer communities for generations. It was not intended as genocide, but the concept of mass incarceration in *konzentrationslager* or concentration camps, with minimal regard for human life, was now understood.

EARLY CAMPS

The first Nazi camps were created by the SA in the wake of Hitler's triumph in 1933. A far cry from the gigantic complexes of later years, they were often no more than empty warehouses or the weed-choked yards of defunct factories. Political opponents were seized, tortured, and in many cases murdered. The SA was reined in and order imposed.

The first formally announced concentration camp, under the control of the SS rather than the SA, was opened at Dachau

outside Munich in 1933. Several others were to follow in the next few years, but the techniques developed at Dachau were applied to all of them.

Under the terms of the notorious *Nacht und Nebel* (night and fog) decree, persons branded 'enemies of the state' could be spirited away under cover of darkness without reason being given and without recourse to the judicial system. Sentences could be as indeterminate as the 'crimes'. Some inmates were Communists, gypsies or Jews – the Nazis' traditional enemies – while others were denounced by neighbours because they stood out in some other way, or were merely the victims of personal grudges.

The Nazis soon realised that not knowing how long you might have to serve was a crushing psychological burden to the prisoners. They frequently prepared men for release, only to throw them back in the cells at the last moment. Physical tortures were still more common; hideous cruelties were regularly perpetrated and the casual execution of inmates became increasingly common after the outbreak of war.



TOTENKOPF: 'DEATH'S HEAD' GUARDS



SS concentration camp guards were from the start separate from the rest of the SS. They originated in the *Politische Beritschaften* – formations of armed SS men ready to fight on behalf of the party and the Führer, which were also the foundations of the *Waffen SS*. However, from the establishment of Dachau they were exclusively concerned with guarding the camps.

Under the control of SS-Gruppenführer Theodor Eicke the *Totenkopf Sturmabanne* wore brown uniforms to distinguish themselves from the rest of the

Left: Roll-call for the SS guards at Neuengamme, some time in the winter of 1943. By this time most of the guard duties were being done by men unfit for combat.

NAZI HORRORS



"An SS guard called us in to the office and asked us if we were cold. We said that we were. He said that he could warm us, and smashed our heads together and kicked us. He asked us again, and we said no."

Left: For the first couple of years camp inmates were put to work at hard labour, typically breaking rocks in quarries for the expanding Autobahn network.

Right: A work party from Auschwitz is led by an SS Death's Head guard, who were soon to run the entire camp system.



Prior to 1939 the concentration camp system was mostly used like the Soviet Gulag: an extraordinarily harsh prison regime into which political opponents could be 'disappeared' without need for trial. Once in the system they could be used as slave labour; their eventual release depended on bribery, shifts in Nazi policy or the whim of an SS official. Some 200,000

people had been imprisoned between 1934 and 1939. Most had been released on pain of never saying what had happened to them in the camps. The silence of such people left a powerful impression on would-be dissenters. At the outbreak of war about 50,000 people were being held in the concentration camps.

The camps were not intended for the elimination of Jews,

although many Jews were imprisoned. Many were released to emigrate, their incarceration serving to stimulate them to flight. Half of Germany's Jewish population left the country between 1933 and 1939, Hitler's plan being to drive them all out – to elsewhere in Europe, the United States, or even the French colony of Madagascar.

The war changed everything.

In 1939 Germany conquered Poland, home to the second largest Jewish community in the world. In 1941 the Reich occupied much of the largest, as most of European Russia was overrun. There could be no further thoughts of expelling the Jews. Thoughts turned to other, more radical means to remove them. Meanwhile, at least ten concentration camps were

black-clad SS. At Dachau, Eicke evolved the techniques to be used at all future camps, and as each new camp was opened, a new Totenkopf Sturmabteilung would be formed, completely outside the control of the rest of the SS.

By 1936, there were more than 3,500 Totenkopf guards, which were now officially known as Totenkopfverbände. In 1937 Eicke reorganised the five Sturmabteilungen into three Totenkopfstandarten with a fourth located in Austria after the Anschluss.

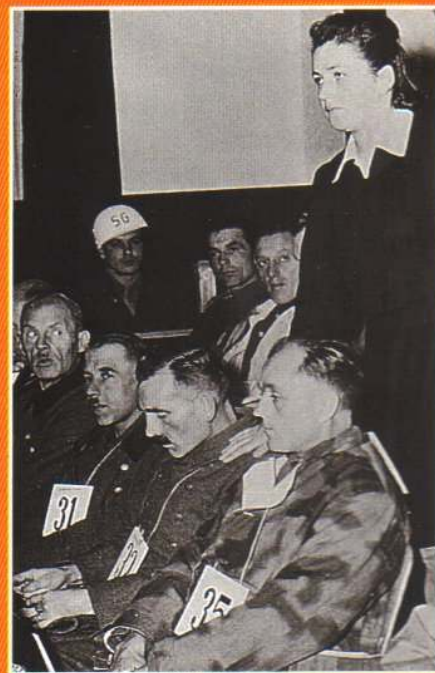
Even though the camp guards provided the nucleus of men for what became the third Waffen-SS division, the guards remained a law unto themselves. The outbreak of war saw the numbers of camps rocket, and Totenkopf numbers also rose dramatically. However, the need for men at the front meant that the camp guards were mainly older men or young recruits waiting to be transferred to a fighting division. As the war progressed, more of the guard duties were performed by collaborators, especially at the camps in occupied Eastern Europe.

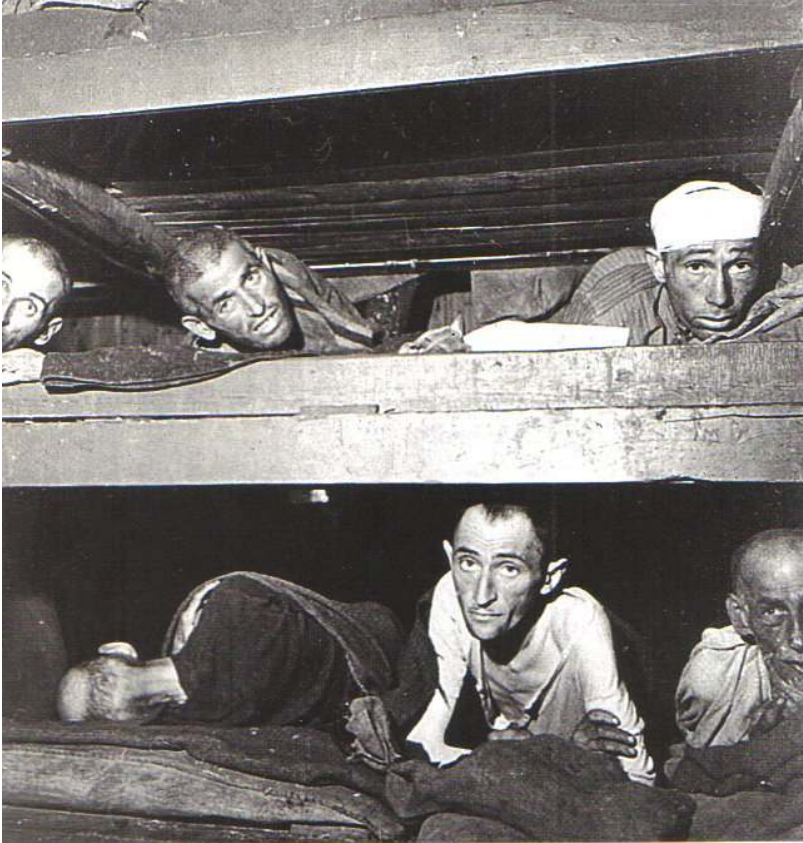
By 1945 there were more than 40,000 guards, operating concentration camps, labour camps and extermination camps. These men had primary responsibility for the implementation of the final solution.



Above: Guard commanders at Sachsenhausen report to the camp commandant after a head count of prisoners in the camp. From the left they are Hauptscharführer Campe, Unterscharführers Meyer and Saathoff, Hauptscharführer Hohmann, Scharführer Kramer and Unterscharführer Schröter und Seifert.

Right: Few of the camp guards ever envisaged being brought to book for their crimes, but thousands were tried after the war. Here camp guard Kirsch, accused of murder and numerous atrocities, is identified by former inmate Reba Levi. The occasion was the first US military tribunal held at Dachau, where proceedings were brought against SS guards and medical personnel.





Above: Soviet troops liberated the Auschwitz complex at the end of January 1945. Although tens of thousands of prisoners remained in the three main camps, more than 60,000 Jews had been evacuated westwards by the Germans. Many died in the death march to Wodzislaw: the survivors were sent by rail to camps in Germany.

Left: When the Americans liberated Buchenwald in April 1945, they found more than 20,000 prisoners – around 30,000 had been evacuated in the month before. Most were slave labourers, a number having been used in the construction of Nazi secret weapons.

created in Yugoslavia as the German invasion triggered a furious round of 'ethnic cleansing' for which the Balkan Wars of the 1990s are a belated revenge. The Croatian Ustase movement began the genocide of its Serb opponents with the active support of the German armed forces.

The *Einsatzgruppen* began Germany's own programme of genocide with mass shootings across eastern Europe. Massacres of Jews and Communist party officials sometimes involved tens of thousands of victims at a time. But the Germans were not alone: Hitler's occupation rekindled ancient hatreds, and locally raised militia in the Baltic states, Belorussia and the Ukraine assisted in these operations with bloody efficiency, in some cases levelling old scores from the Russian revolution while in others, it was the product of rivalries and hatreds dating back generations.

GENOCIDE

Early in 1942 the decision was made to create the unique industrial apparatus indelibly associated with Hitler's Third Reich: the railway lines, gas chambers and crematoria, the machinery of the 'Final Solution'. Seven camps, all in

"There were 5,000 of us when we left Birkenau. After eight days only half of us were left. The others died from suffocation or from starvation or were shot by the SS. The railroad line was strewn with bodies thrown out to make room for the living"

**Charles Naparstek
Auschwitz survivor**

eastern Europe, were involved in the systematic extermination of European Jews. Himmler's officials calculated that shooting people — even 30,000 at a time as at Babi Yar in September 1941 — was too slow a method to kill the 10 million and more Jews in the new German empire. Also, Himmler recognized the mental strain that such slaughters placed on the perpetrators. The stimulus for the gas chambers was, ironically, Himmler's determination to find a 'higher form of killing' that placed less stress on the murderers. Hence the subterfuge, the 'showers' that were really execution chambers,

the flowers, the murder at one remove by tipping a bucket of blue Zyklon-B crystals down a chute. Relays of other prisoners, known as kapos, did the dirty work of clearing out bodies, prising out gold teeth and feeding the corpses into the ovens. In time, the kapos were themselves murdered, and a new team recruited to its grisly duty until their turn came to die.

The use of sealed chambers that could be flooded with poison gas was the ultimate solution to the business of mass murder. It was pioneered in the Nazi doctors' euthanasia programme which had started with lethal injections for the mentally handicapped and ended in the wholesale slaughter of the disabled, including veterans from World War I.

There is no document relating to the Holocaust that bears Hitler's signature: a flimsy pretext for his apologists to deny he knew or even, in extreme cases, to argue that the act of genocide never took place.

In fact there are volumes of surviving documentation and correspondence dealing with the Holocaust, of which the technical minutiae are, by their very banality, the most stomach-churning. German engineering companies competed to supply

improved gas ovens, capable of burning a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand human bodies a day. The disposal of so many people posed numerous problems: fat ignited, increasing the temperature and melting the grates. If the ovens were allowed to cool — necessary to keep them clean — remaining fat congealed and had to be scrapped out manually. Even at the highest temperatures, tons of sooty residue remained and had to be scattered across fields or tipped in rivers.

SLAVE LABOUR

Just as the extermination programme gathered pace, some of the Nazi leaders sought to delay or at least re-focus it. Defeat at the gates of Moscow in December 1941 revealed there were limits to German military power: it was going to be a long war and Germany needed every able-bodied person. Forced labourers were shipped to Germany to work on the land or in the factories, but when attention turned to the 2 million Soviet soldiers taken prisoner by spring 1942 it was revealed that most had been killed. Held in the open, denied food or medical aid, they perished by the hundreds of thousands that winter. Others



were already being sent into the extermination camps to be gassed. Would it not make better sense to exploit the Jews and Soviet prisoners as a source of slave labour?

This tension between the Nazis' murderous intentions and Germany's labour shortage was never really resolved. In theory, the inmates of the concentration camps were put to work; in the extermination camps workers would be selected from incoming shipments of prisoners, to be literally worked to death. Those too weak at the start — old people, children, pregnant mothers — were sent straight from the cattle trucks to the gas chambers. At Auschwitz-Birkenau they used a stick in the ground to determine the fate of their youngest prisoners: those taller than the stick were deemed old enough to work; those any

shorter were gassed. But the cruelty with which the camps were organised ran counter to the aim of exploiting the victims as slave labour. Malnutrition, disease and the arbitrary cruelty of the guards combined to take a fearful toll of the inmates.

Starved, beaten and sick, prisoners had little prospect of escape from the concentration camps. But while some people did not resist the ghastly fate confronting them, others organized resistance inside several camps including Auschwitz. It was mostly passive; hiding babies which, if found, would be immediately consigned to the flames, or rescuing friends from selection for medical experiments. At Auschwitz there were plans for a mass break-out that was triggered early by mistake and ended bloodily in a shoot-out

between the SS and those kapos who had seized weapons. At Sobibor there was a more successful mass escape attempt, organised by Russian prisoners. Although many were hunted down, some did get away.

RETRIBUTION

And so did most of the camp guards when the war ended. Although a number of camp commandants were tried and executed after 1945, most of the men (and women) who worked in the camps never paid for their crimes. The occasional trial today of an ageing emigré, in spite of the problems of dealing with events over a half a century in the past, represents a belated, guilty reaction in the west.

If justice has proved elusive, there was vengeance aplenty at the time. Although several camps were demolished — at

Treblinka the buildings were razed, the ground ploughed and planted with trees — there was too much to hide before the Allied armies arrived. The impact of Auschwitz and Majdenek on the young soldiers of the Red Army cannot be exaggerated: the discovery of such camps, complete with warehouses full of loot and the gas ovens still warm seemed to confirm the most venomous outpourings of the Soviet propaganda machine.

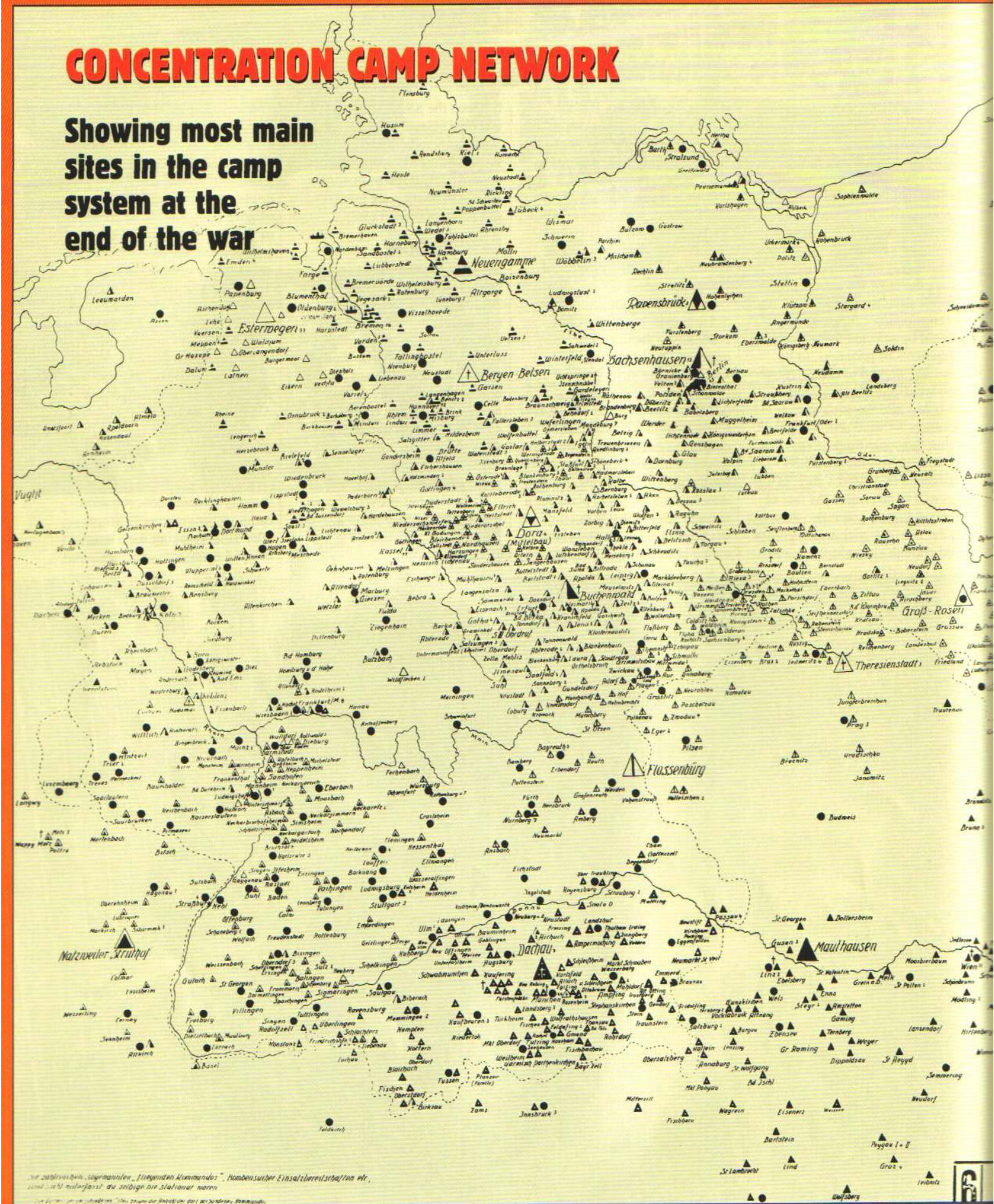
The Soviets entered Germany set on revenge and, as the Red Army liberated camp after camp, it swept thousands of inmates into its depleted rifle divisions. The consequences for German civilians were truly hideous, as recently released concentration camp victims stormed village after village, taking their long-delayed revenge.

For many prisoners, liberation came too late. Starved and tortured to the edge of death, they did not have the will or the physical strength to survive even after the Allies arrived.



CONCENTRATION CAMP NETWORK

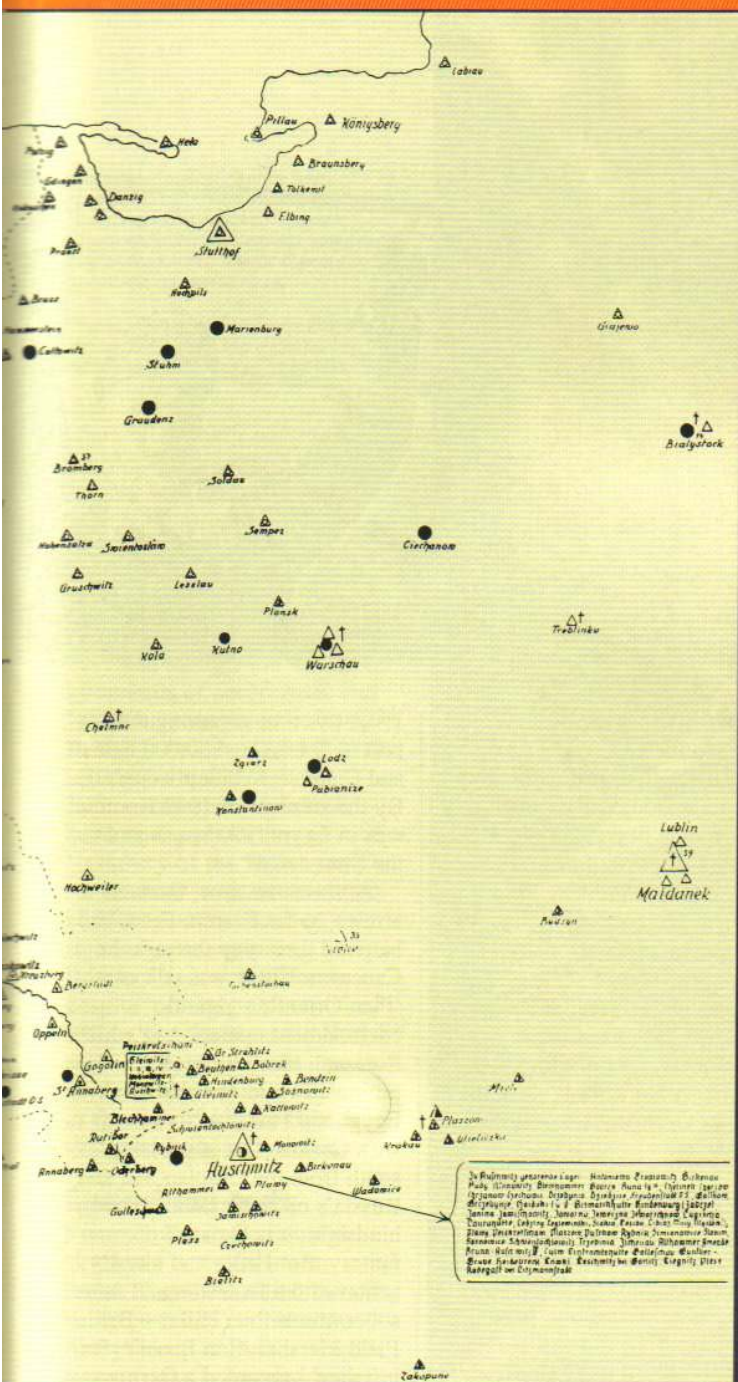
Showing most main sites in the camp system at the end of the war



Die zahlreichen sogenannten "Jugendkonzentrationen", besonders die Einsatzgruppen der SS, sind nicht mitgeführt, da sie nicht als Lagerstätten waren.

Die Karte zeigt die Lage der Lager am Ende des Krieges. Die Lager sind nach ihrer Größe und Bedeutung geordnet. Die Karte ist eine Kopie der Karte des Reichsministeriums für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda.





Deutschland 1945

▲ Dachau / Buchenwald ▲ Sachsenhausen ▲ Mauthausen ▲ Flossenbürg ▲ Neuengamme
 ▲ Natzweiler ▲ Ravensbrück ▲ Groß-Rosen ▲ Stutthof ▲ Hirschowitz ▲ Bernau-Mittelbau
 ■ Gestapo Gefängnisse ▲ Vernichtungslager

Karte der Konzentrationslager und Vernichtungslager

Vernichtungslager: Auschwitz-Birkenau (Polen) (Himmler, Heydrich, Eichmann, etc.), Treblinka (Polen), Sobibor (Polen), Belzec (Polen), Majdanek (Polen), Chelmno (Polen), Jasku (Polen), Ponary (Litauen), Rumbula (Lettland), Jajce (Bosnien), Khatyn (Belarus), Babi Jar (Ukraine), etc.

Erziehungs- und Arbeitslager: Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Mauthausen, Flossenbürg, Neuengamme, etc.

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Karte der Konzentrationslager und Vernichtungslager

Karte der Konzentrationslager und Vernichtungslager

MAIN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Date Established	Type of camp	Maximum capacity of main camp
1933	Oranienburg	First Concentration camp north of Berlin started by the SA
	Dachau	Concentration and labour camp near Munich
1936	Sachsenhausen	Concentration and labour camp at Oranienburg, superseding earlier camp
1937	Buchenwald	Concentration camp near Erfurt: centre of huge slave-labour network
1938	Neuengamme	Concentration and labour camp near Hamburg
	Flossenbürg	Concentration and labour camp east of Nuremberg
	Mauthausen	Concentration and labour camp near Linz
1939	Ravensbrück	Concentration and labour camp for women, 80 km north of Berlin
	Stutthof	Internment camp near Danzig later converted to a concentration and labour camp
1940	Auschwitz	Originally a POW camp which became the largest concentration and slave labour camp.
	Belzec (Poland)	Labour camp for Jews converted to an extermination camp in 1941
1941	Chelmno (Poland)	Extermination camp
	Gross Rosen	Concentration and labour camp, originally a sub-camp of Sachsenhausen
	Treblinka (Poland)	Extermination camp
	Natzweiler (France)	Concentration and labour camp near Strasbourg
	Majdanek (Poland)	Concentration, labour and extermination camp near Lublin
1942	Birkenau (Poland)	Extermination camp at Auschwitz
	Sobibor (Poland)	Extermination camp
1943	Mittelbau-Dora	Slave labour camp, originally a sub-camp of Buchenwald. Also known as Nordhausen
	Bergen-Belsen	Concentration camp near Celle
	Vught (Netherlands)	Concentration and labour camp complex



Erwin Rommel

THE DESERT FOX



Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was the most famous German general of World War II: a military genius without doubt, lauded even by his enemies but, in October 1944, murdered by the Nazis.

ROMMEL shot to fame in 1940, leading his 7th Panzer Division with such panache that it became known as the 'ghost division', sweeping through the enemy so quickly that no-one, not even German headquarters, knew where he was. But it was in North Africa, as commander of the Afrika Korps, that he won his enduring reputation as one of the greatest commanders of the war.

Rommel's image as a tank commander both in France and the Libyan desert is one of buccaneering brilliance, improvisation, lightning decisions, succeeding by bold bluffs as often as outright attacks. However, leading a panzer division required considerably more than the

gallantry of a *beau sabreur*.

Rommel was a devoted mathematician, known to have memorised logarithm tables to a frightening degree. He kept himself at the cutting edge of technology, endorsing field improvements to all manner of equipment and personally helping to design some of the defensive devices that obstructed the Allied landings in Normandy. One of the officers on the 'Atlantic Wall' described him as Germany's best military engineer.

Into Africa

On 6 February 1941, Rommel was ordered to take charge of a small German expeditionary force being sent to the Italian colony of Libya. A half-hearted Italian invasion of British-held Egypt had met a ferocious response: the Italians were in full retreat and Mussolini's African empire was teetering toward oblivion. Rommel imposed a decisive grip on operations within days, issuing his first orders before he had even taken off for Africa. Although theoretically under Italian command – and with an army that always had more Italians than Germans – Rommel counter-attacked and drove the British right back to the Egyptian frontier. Although a British offensive reclaimed a large swathe of territory in late 1941, Rommel struck again in early

1942, this time capturing the key port of Tobruk and 30,000 British and Commonwealth prisoners. By the summer of 1942 Rommel was in Egypt, 100 km short of the Suez canal.

At the same time, German armies on the Eastern Front had battered their way through the Caucasus. There was talk of a 'Plan Orient', a gigantic encirclement operation in which Rommel, who had been promoted Field Marshal, took Egypt and Palestine to link up with German forces pressing south from the Caspian Sea and Russia's oil fields. With hindsight, it is the stuff of fantasy. But Hitler had already achieved the fantastic, and more sober minds than Hitler – British Field Marshal Alan Brooke, for instance – regarded a German assault on the Middle East as a genuine menace.

A succession of British generals had fought Rommel, lost and been replaced: a dispiriting process for officers and men alike. Although General Auchinleck had arrested Rommel's progress, he too had lost Churchill's confidence and was removed. His successor, General Gott was killed in an air crash and the job devolved to General Bernard Montgomery. The new commander was a towering egomaniac who inspired love or hate, never indifference. But he was as tireless and ruthless as Rommel,



Right: Rommel became a national hero in Germany, and after the end of the African adventure he was given command of an army group on the Western Front. Here he was charged with preparing defences against the inevitable Allied invasion of Europe.

Left: Erwin Rommel in his element: with his beloved Afrika Korps on the road to Tobruk. Rommel's African career ensured his place in the list of Germany's greatest commanders.

Right: Rommel led from the front, on occasion taking direct command of troops in battle.

shared Rommel's passion for physical exercise and (although it came less naturally) spoke frequently to ordinary soldiers, animating the thrice-beaten Eighth Army as never before.

Rommel's supplies came across the Mediterranean from Italy and along 1400 kilometres of desert road. But Malta sat squarely in the way. British submarines and aircraft inflicted a terrible toll on Italian convoys and Tobruk became known as the 'cemetery of the Italian navy'. As German supplies dwindled, so Montgomery received a flood of new equipment. Rommel had won victories despite inferior numbers before, but this time the British high command did not lose its nerve: at the battle of Alamein in October 1942, the British shattered Rommel's defences.

Against the odds

Rommel was in Germany on sick leave when the storm broke. There was talk of him being posted to command an Army Group in Russia after his recovery, but he hurried back to Egypt to inherit a dire situation. Only an immediate withdrawal could save his army, but Hitler signalled a firm order to stand fast. For 24 hours, Rommel obeyed until, unable to watch the immolation of his beloved 'Afrikaners', he unilaterally ordered a fighting retreat.

The Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria a few weeks later spelt the end of the African adventure, but Hitler demanded the retention of Tunisia to delay any attempt against mainland Europe. It was a sensible plan, and Rommel's last major strike in Africa – a sudden swipe against the



Rommel's early career

Infantryman who switched to tanks

Like most of Hitler's generals, Rommel saw extensive combat in World War I. At Langarone in 1917, fighting his future Italian allies, he won Germany's (then) highest award for bravery, the *Pour le Merite*. At least one of his subordinates in Africa fought on the opposing side.

Although never a member of the General Staff, Rommel's ability as an infantry commander marked him for higher things between the wars, even in the much reduced Reichswehr. His book 'Infantry Attacks' is still in print: a vivid and perceptive account of his war.

As a newly promoted *Generalmajor*, Rommel commanded Hitler's personal headquarters during the invasion of Poland. He took to Hitler, admiring his command of detail, his steadfastness of purpose. Rommel was a level-headed career officer, not a man to suffer fools gladly, so the fact that the Führer could hold such a man in his spell demonstrates the elemental force of Hitler's character. At his own request, and despite his infantry background, Rommel was granted command of a panzer division for the campaign in the west.



Above: Rommel, as commander of Hitler's military HQ, sleeps on the Führer's train on the way to witness the last attacks on Warsaw.



Left: Rommel's switch to commanding a tank division was an immediate success: here he accepts the surrender of local French forces at St. Valéry. His 7th Panzer Division had swept across France to the mouth of the Somme in days.

inexperienced American army—inflicted a nasty surprise at Kasserine. But Hitler poured men into Tunisia long after Allied naval and sea superiority threatened to cut them off. When the Axis forces there were compelled to surrender, over 100,000 Germans were captured. Not for nothing was it

named 'Tunisgrad'.

Rommel now found himself in command of Army Group B in France. Disenchanted with Hitler, convinced that the war could no longer be won, he nevertheless effected a transformation of the German defences, shaking the garrisons out of their lethargy and creating

a formidable belt of mines and obstacles in the coastal zone.

Hitler had said that "the Allies will never make peace with me", which Rommel accepted. But he could never bring himself to countenance the one obvious way make peace with the west possible – to kill Hitler. Naively he hoped that some kind of undefined 'legal means' could be used to remove the dictator.

Normandy invasion

When the storm broke in Normandy in June 1944, Rommel's armies prevented a rapid Allied breakout, but were (as he predicted) unable to organise a massed armoured counter-attack. Allied airpower made movement by day all but impossible. Rommel himself was badly injured on 17 July when his staff car was strafed.

He was evacuated to Paris and then home to Germany. He had, in any case, already signed his own death warrant.

On 29 June Rommel had given a military briefing to Hitler. He tried repeatedly to draw the obvious conclusion from the imminent collapse of the Normandy front. In this he was echoing Field Marshal von Rundstedt, who had been asked by Hitler's lackey Keitel what to do if the Allies broke out. He replied "make peace, you fool".

But it was one thing to state an unpalatable truth to Hitler's obsequious military adviser. It was quite another to do so to the Führer himself. When Rommel attempted another comment about wider matters, Hitler threw one of his famous tantrums and ordered the Field Marshal from the room. They never met again.



Left: Rommel examines the terrain on the coast of France. With him is Lieutenant-General Speidel, his chief-of-staff, who was much more deeply implicated in the plot to kill Hitler than was the Field Marshal. Speidel would survive the war and go on to high NATO command.



Above: Part of Rommel's disillusion was due to his health: the strenuous campaign in Africa left the once dashing commander a sick man by the time he faced the Allies in Normandy.

Below: In the early years of the war Rommel had been a fervent supporter of Hitler, who had looked on the general with great favour. By 1943, however, the mutual respect had long gone.



Disillusion and death

On 16 July 1944, Rommel signed a joint letter with Field Marshal Kluge to Hitler, demanding peace negotiations with the western Allies. Kluge had some knowledge of the conspiracy against Hitler, but subsequent Gestapo investigation never revealed more than circumstantial evidence that Rommel knew of the bomb plot. Given that a close friend died in the explosion at Rastenburg on 20 July, Rommel probably had little notion that plans were so advanced.

As Rommel recovered at home from the wounds he had received in Normandy, Himmler's inquisition ran its bloody course. Rommel's old friend Field Marshal Stülpnagel, latterly commander in France, had played a leading role in the attempted putsch. He was executed after a failed suicide attempt. Kluge swallowed poison rather than obey a summons to Berlin. Rommel's chief-of-staff was arrested. According to the testimony, extracted in the Gestapo's customary manner from *Oberstleutnant* Casar von Hofacker, Rommel did have prior knowledge of the coup. This 'confession', his letter and known 'defeatism' condemned Rommel.

Generals Burgdorf and Maisel arrived at his house, driven by an SS chauffeur. Several cars of plain-clothes Gestapo men parked along the



Above: A Rommel family snapshot taken not long before his enforced suicide. Rommel had married his wife Lucie in 1916, and the 'Letters to Lu' he had written all their married life form the core of his memoirs. Their teenage son Manfred was serving in a HitlerJugend flak unit when his father died: he was to go on to become mayor of Stuttgart after the war.

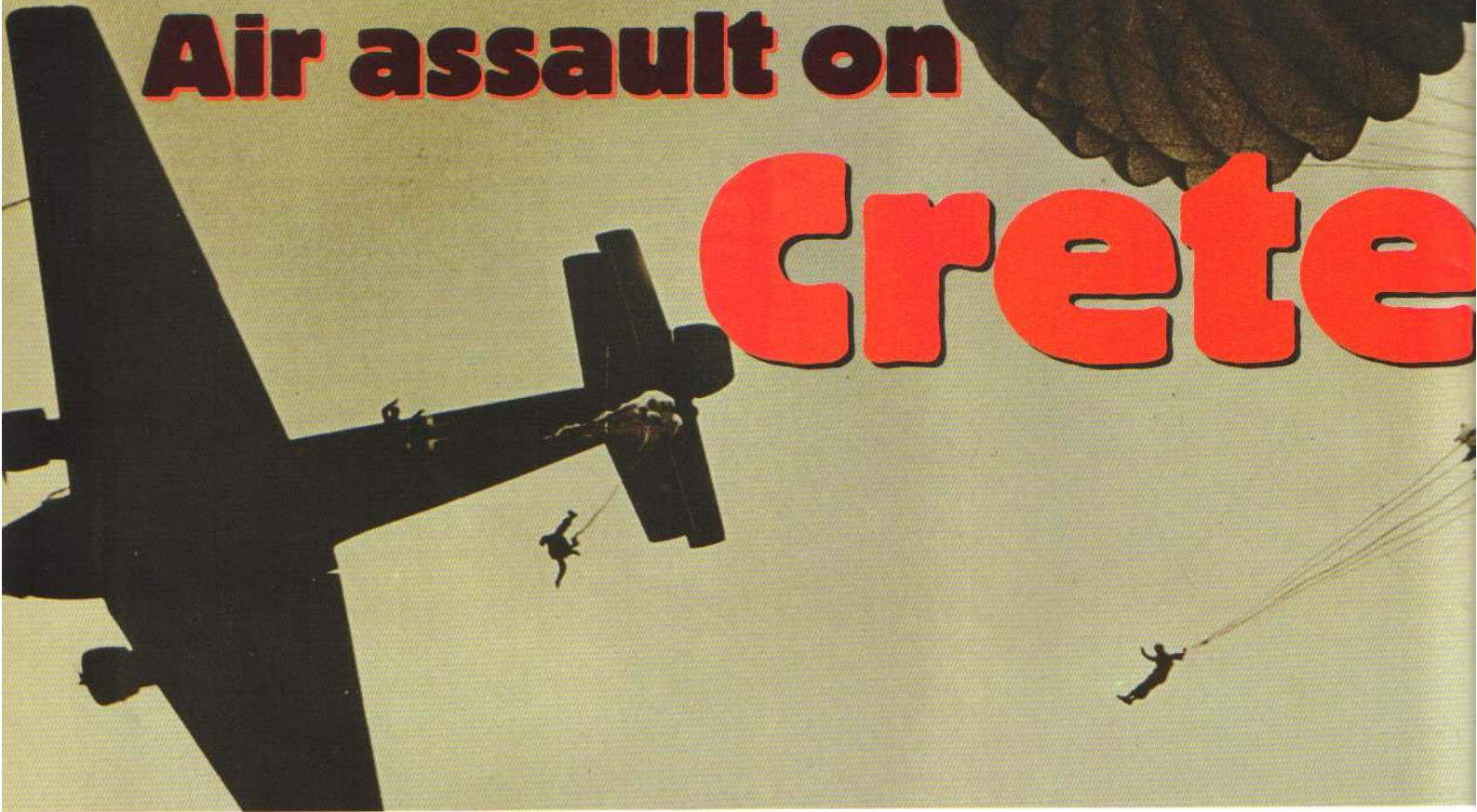
street. Rommel was given a stark choice: swallow poison, in which case his wife and young son would not be harmed, or stand trial and see them sent to a concentration camp if, or more accurately when, he was convicted. The party very much wanted the former, since the treason trial of one of the nation's greatest heroes would be a public relations disaster.

The threat to his family was enough for Rommel. He said goodbye to his wife, spent a further 30 minutes with his son, then got into the car with the generals. They brought his dead body to a hospital, announcing that the field marshal had suffered a heart attack. In a nauseating display of Nazi hypocrisy, a state funeral followed.

Never having served in Russia, Rommel enjoys a better post-war reputation than most of his contemporaries. He fought a remarkably 'clean' war in North Africa, earning, across all the bitterness of war, a generous tribute from Winston Churchill. One of the great battlefield commanders in history, it was Rommel's tragedy that his talents were devoted to the service of such an ignoble cause.



Air assault on Crete



The British had been kicked out of Greece, but the German Navy did not have the amphibious capability to get the Wehrmacht onto Crete. So how could the island be attacked and taken?

IT IS HARD now to realise just what a shock it was. To the British forces who were on the receiving end, the airborne attack on Crete in May 1941 was almost like an attack by forces from a science fiction film.

It was a world where fighting men wore buttoned woollen battle dress, leather-soled steel-studded boots and puttees or canvas gaiters, and were armed with bolt action rifles or water cooled machine guns. The Germans, in their zippered jump smocks, high-laced rubber-soled boots, sub-machine guns and automatic rifles, could almost have come from another planet.

Their arrival on the Greek island by glider and parachute was the final, futuristic feature of the battle.

The decision to attack Crete followed from the successful German campaign through Yugoslavia into Greece in the spring of 1941, which had forced the British off the mainland of Europe in a humiliating seaborne evacuation.

THREAT FROM CRETE

For Hitler and his planners, Crete presented a potential problem. Should the RAF base bombers on Cretan airfields, they would be within range of the Romanian oil fields at Ploesti. And Romanian oil was going to be vital to the success of Operation Barbarossa, the massive attack about to be launched against the Soviet Union. Crete would have to be neutralised.

But that was easier said than done. The problem was that though the Axis powers enjoyed

local air superiority, they did not command the sea. The Italian fleet had been severely mauled by the Royal Navy and was in no position to support a major amphibious operation.

However, British warships would not be a factor if the attack came from above, and it was decided to mount a major airborne assault. This was not without its risks. German *Fallschirmjager* had achieved great success in small-unit actions on the Western Front in 1940. But an airborne invasion was a vastly greater challenge.

Unlike most of the major combatants in World War II, whose airborne forces were usually army troops, the elite German airborne units were part of the Luftwaffe. Though this had some operational disadvantages when fighting alongside the Wehrmacht, it



Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger drop from a Junkers Ju 52 transport. The new plan called for a surprise assault from the air to capture key airfields, after which reinforcements could be flown in.



Above: The original German plan called for a seaborne assault on Crete, which would be supported by paratroopers. But transport would have had to rely on fishing boats and other small craft available in the small Greek ports. In any case, the Kriegsmarine did not have the strength in the Mediterranean to push the Royal Navy aside, and losses among the seaborne invasion force were high.

AIRBORNE PIONEER

In many ways, Kurt Student was the creator of modern airborne forces. Born in Birkholz in 1890, he was an infantryman turned pilot during World War I. Between the wars he advised the Reichswehr on aviation, and was sent as an observer to watch Soviet air exercises, during which he saw paratroopers in action for the first time. Transferring to the newly-formed Luftwaffe in 1934, he became chief of parachute and glider forces. In 1938, he formed a parachute battalion, and by the outbreak of war he was in command of the world's first airborne division. The 7th *Fliegerdivision* was not used en masse until Crete, but detachments of his *Fallschirmjäger* performed highly successful special operations in Norway, Belgium, Holland, France and in the Balkans.



provided a unique bond between the transport pilots and ground-attack aircrew who supported the paratroopers in combat.

German intelligence about the island and garrison was patchy. They knew that there were about 6,000 British and Greek troops stationed on Crete, but did not know that numbers had been swelled with 27,000 men who had been evacuated from Greece – though most had had to leave their arms and equipment on the mainland.

The men, aircraft and equipment necessary for the assault were scattered all over France, Germany and Greece. There was a lot of message traffic as the force was gathered, and as coded signals passed back and forth, they were intercepted by British ULTRA codebreakers. As a result, Major General Freyberg, the New

"At dawn on the morning of 20 May, my men heard a new tone in the regular Luftwaffe morning visit: like a swarm of bees, which got louder. They saw a huge fleet of aircraft coming across the sea, and the sky blossomed with parachutes"

Major-General Bernard Freyberg VC

Zealander commanding Commonwealth forces on the island, knew the enemy plans in almost the same level of detail as the paratroopers who were about to land. He was able to anticipate them – but only up to a point, since the British intelligence services feared that too much pre-planning might compromise ULTRA. For years after the battle, the Allied explanation of their initial effective reaction to the airborne assault was to say that tactics had been based on a Luftwaffe manual captured during fighting in Holland in 1940.

The assault opened just after dawn on the morning of 20 May, with intensive air raids against Maleme and Canea. The first assault troops to arrive, the spearhead of Group West, were 500 glider troops delivered to the airfield at

Maleme, followed by more than 1,800 paratroopers.

The garrison reacted very aggressively. Many Germans were killed as they floated down on their parachutes; others died struggling out of their harness. Some of the ten-man gliders crashed, killing their passengers. The Germans did manage to achieve a foothold around Canea, and in the dry river bed of the Tavronitis west of Maleme, but they were hard-pressed.

In the afternoon the second wave of 1,500 men from *Fallschirmjägerregiment 2* (FJR 2) in Group Centre attacking Retimo were effectively neutralised as a fighting force, and 2,000 men of FJR 1 in Group East landing at Heraklion suffered heavy casualties. The survivors of the Retimo drop were reduced to two groups, besieged in a chapel



and an olive oil factory.

At the Hotel Grand Bretagne, the Luftwaffe's operational headquarters in Athens, General Student learned that a Ju 52 transport flown by Captain Kleye had managed to land at Maleme, albeit under small arms fire. He decided that reinforcement was a viable risk, but should only be committed to Group West.

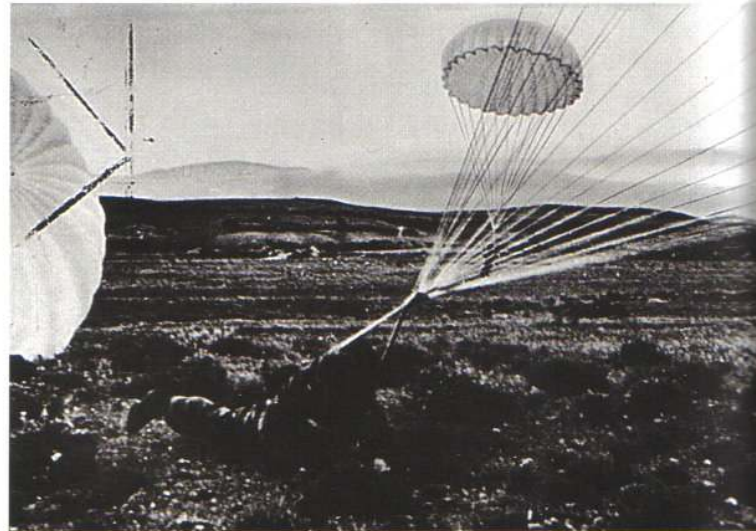
FATAL MISTAKE

Two understrength New Zealand battalions, the 22nd and 23rd, covered Maleme and Point 107, the high ground which dominated the airfield. In the confusion of the battle they were convinced that they were being outflanked, and on the night of the 20th-21st pulled back. It was a move that would prove critical to the campaign, since their

withdrawal left Point 107 unoccupied, and fire from that high ground would have prevented the use of the airfield for reinforcement.

During the nights of 21 and 22 May the Royal Navy, directed by ULTRA intelligence, intercepted and sank most of the seaborne elements of the German army mountain division commanded by *Generalleutnant* Ringel. Three cruisers and a number of destroyers made short work of the fishing boats, and the glare of the searchlights and flashes of gunfire could be seen by the soldiers in Canea and Maleme less than 30 kilometres away.

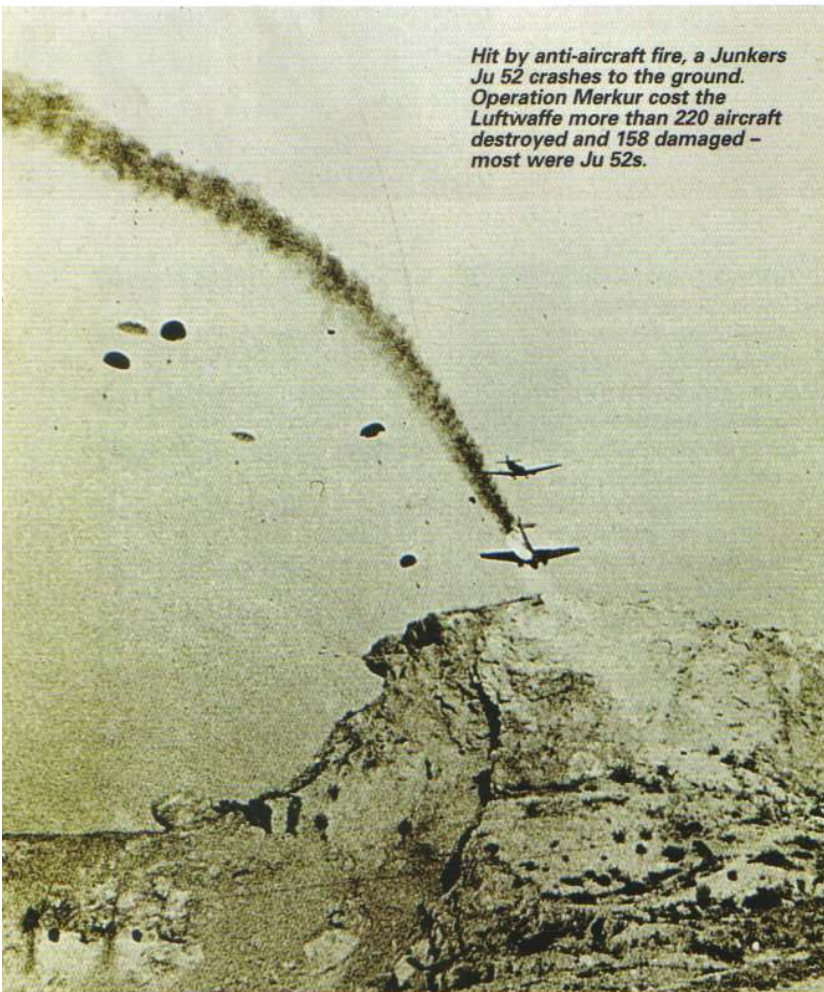
German patrols discovered that Point 107 was undefended at dawn on the 21st and occupied it. With Maleme almost secure, the Germans piled on the pressure. Student



Above: Fallschirmjäger land on Crete. The RZ-16 parachute used by the Germans had no quick-release mechanism, and in windy weather paratroopers were often dragged for long distances.

Below: Luftwaffe bombers strike at a British-held village as the German paratroopers try to retain their precarious foothold on Crete.

Bottom: Fallschirmjäger move casually through the streets of Heraklion after the withdrawal of Commonwealth forces to the south coast.



Hit by anti-aircraft fire, a Junkers Ju 52 crashes to the ground. Operation Merkur cost the Luftwaffe more than 220 aircraft destroyed and 158 damaged – most were Ju 52s.



Plan of Attack



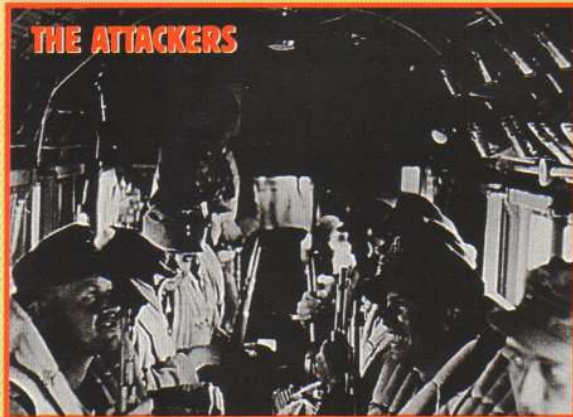
The German plan of attack involving the paratroops of *Fliegerkorps XI* was the result of a compromise. *Generaloberst* Alexander Lohr of *Luftflotte 4*, in overall command of the operation, favoured landings around Canea and Maleme in the west and a thrust eastward along the island. Commanding the paratroopers was *Generalleutnant*

Kurt Student, the founding father of German airborne forces. He wanted landings at three points – Canea/Maleme, Retimo in the west of the island and Heraklion in the centre.

The compromise was a two-phase attack, phase one consisting of a drop on Maleme/Canea on the morning of 20 May, with further drops on Retimo and Heraklion in the afternoon.

Balance of forces

THE ATTACKERS



General Student's *Fliegerkorps XI* comprised *Fliegerdivision 7* – three parachute regiments each of three battalions with divisional artillery, engineers and signals – and an Airborne Assault Regiment with three parachute battalions and a gliderborne battalion. These could muster a strength of around 8,100 men. *Generalmajor* Conrad commanded the transport element of the corps – nearly 500 Ju 52 transports and 72 DFS 230 gliders.

Air support came from 180 single- and twin-engined fighters, 205 dive-bombers and 228 medium bombers of *Fliegerkorps VIII*, commanded by *Generalleutnant* von Richthofen.

Although mainly a Luftwaffe operation, the invasion relied on the army for follow-up troops. These consisted of the 5th *Gebirgsjäger* division under *Generalleutnant* Julius Ringel, whose three mountain rifle regiments and single motor-cycle battalion were to be flown into action once the paratroopers had secured an airfield. Two further battalions of mountain troops would come by sea, with vehicles, AA guns, field artillery and engineers being transported in two lifts aboard 25 and 38 Greek fishing boats respectively, escorted by Italian motor torpedo boats.

Commonwealth forces on Crete were commanded by the formidable Major-General Bernard Freyberg VC. Troops under the New Zealander's command included the British 14th Infantry Brigade at Heraklion, reinforced with one Greek and two Australian battalions; the 19th Australian Brigade at Retimo, reinforced with two Greek battalions; two Australian battalions as mobile reserve at Suda Bay and Canea, alongside a mixed force of army, Navy and Royal Marine personnel.

The decisive sector proved to be in the west at Galatas, Maleme and Maleme airfield. Here the 2nd New Zealand

Division was positioned, with its 10th Brigade around Galatas and two Greek battalions to the south. Astride the so called 'Prison Valley' were the 5th New Zealand Brigade, the 28th Maori Battalion, the divisional engineers acting as infantry and the 21st, 22nd and 23rd New Zealand Infantry Battalions. The understrength 22nd NZ Battalion covered Maleme airfield.

There was limited transport, little anti-aircraft and artillery support and almost no radios for the garrison: even basic defence stores such as barbed wire, sand bags and picks and shovels were in very short supply.

THE DEFENDERS





Left: Fallschirmjäger retake the village of Galatas after being forced out by two companies of New Zealand infantry.

Luftwaffe attacks wreaked havoc during the evacuation. British naval losses were so high – three cruisers and six destroyers sunk and 17 warships damaged – that the evacuation was abandoned on the 30th leaving 5,000 men to be taken prisoner. At Heraklion the Royal Navy was able to evacuate the garrison, but at Retimo, which had put up the most effective defence, they were all taken prisoner. Some of the men who had not been evacuated evaded capture. A few even managed to find craft to cross the 300 km of water to North Africa. Others were evacuated by submarine.

When the fighting was over, unfounded rumours circulated that German paratroopers had been murdered by Cretan civilians. The Cretans suffered a harsh occupation, which began with the execution of 698 men whom the Germans regarded as *francs-tireurs* – civilian snipers. In four months, the occupation forces executed 1,135 Cretans and destroyed four villages.

committed his last reserve of 1,880 parachute troops into Maleme. Nearly 2,000 mountain troops were landed on the 22nd, and by the 23rd the total had reached 3,650.

On the 22nd, the paratroops and men of the Mountain Division started to push eastwards to link up with their comrades at Canea. Under constant air attack, the British and Commonwealth garrison began to pull back.

BRITISH EVACUATION

With victory snatched from his grasp, General Freyberg realised reluctantly that he would have to order the evacuation of Crete. The only viable port for the Royal Navy to evacuate troops from around Canea and Maleme was the tiny fishing village of Sphakia

on the south coast. But by now the Germans held the village of Galatas on the road south.

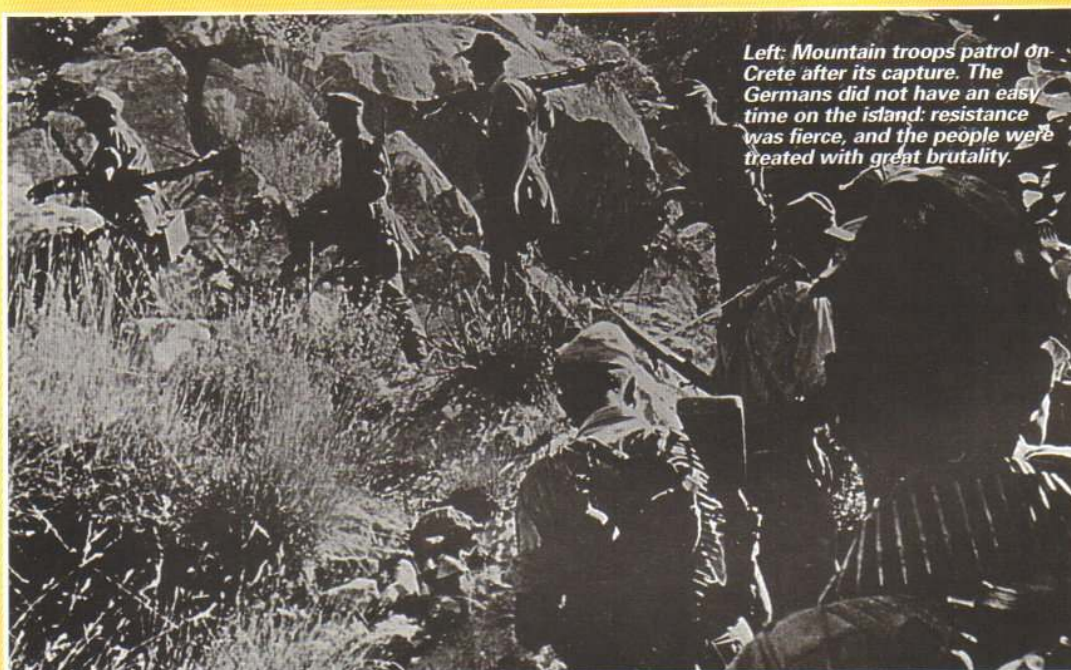
On the 25th Colonel H. K. Kippenberger tasked two companies from the New Zealand 23rd Battalion with the mission of clearing the village. The two companies found their numbers swelled by individuals and groups who were eager for revenge against the Germans. New Zealand, Australian and British troops who only a few days earlier had had the enemy on the run were determined to prove they could do it again. Yelling a Maori haka, or war song, and supported by two light tanks, the men charged into the village and drove the Germans out, clearing the road south. Men began the long climb over the Cretan mountain spine to Sphakia.



The town of Heraklion burns after a heavy attack by German Stukas and medium bombers.

The cost of Crete

Although large numbers of British and Commonwealth troops were rescued from Crete, several thousand could not reach the evacuation points. Most were taken prisoner.



Left: Mountain troops patrol on Crete after its capture. The Germans did not have an easy time on the island: resistance was fierce, and the people were treated with great brutality.

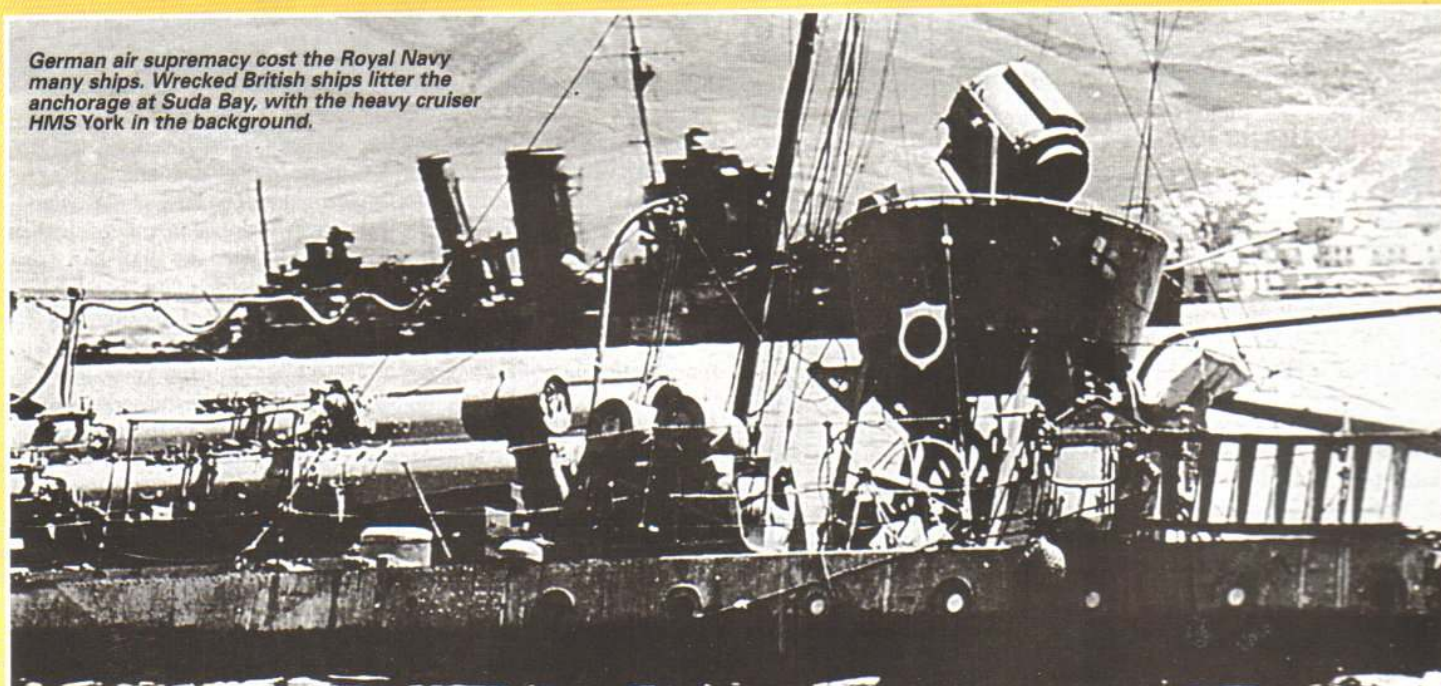
British and Commonwealth losses were 1,742 killed and missing, 2,225 wounded, with 11,370 captured. The Royal Navy lost 2,000 men killed and 183 wounded.

However Crete was a Pyrrhic victory for the Germans. They lost more than 4,000 killed or missing and over 2,500 wounded. The bulk of the casualties were paratroopers, who suffered near 50 percent losses. Of the 500 Ju 52 transport aircraft employed over half were destroyed.

Faced by these casualties Hitler announced to Student that "the day of the parachutist is over. The parachute arm is a surprise weapon and without the element of surprise there can be no future for airborne forces".

With these words the Führer ensured that the superbly-trained German *Fallschirmjäger* would no longer be used in airborne assaults, and would be expended as infantry.

German air supremacy cost the Royal Navy many ships. Wrecked British ships litter the anchorage at Suda Bay, with the heavy cruiser HMS York in the background.





Hitler's Superguns



A 28-cm K5(E) opens fire on England from its position in the Pas de Calais. Although German railway guns could easily bridge the 35-km (21 mile) width of the English Channel, at such long range they could not engage specific targets with any great accuracy.

AFTER THE 1991 Gulf War it emerged that Saddam Hussein's 'supergun' really existed: ballistics expert Gerald Bull had helped the Iraqis assemble a gigantic cannon dug into a hillside. But it was never completed. So the world record for the biggest gun ever fired in action is still held by 'Gustav': Adolf Hitler's favourite gun. It was one of a family of monstrous cannon, intended to shatter

concrete forts and bombard far distant targets – two of them fired shells deep into Kent from across the English Channel.

Incredibly, the Krupp 80 cm Kanone (Eisenbahn) was built as a private venture, not to government order. It weighed over a thousand tonnes, needed two parallel railway tracks on which to stand and took 2,000 men up to six weeks to assemble it. Its monstrous barrel was over 30 metres long. Thrust high in the air it was a horribly Freudian manifestation of Nazi superiority.

Invited to the first demonstration firing in 1940, Hitler loved it at once and called it 'Gustav' after the 70-year-old head of the Krupp family. (Gustav Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach was chairman of a group of German industrialists set up in 1933 to fund the Nazi party.)

RAIL GUN DEVELOPMENT

'Gustav' was the last and greatest of the Nazi railway guns, but the German rail gun programme had been under way since the early 1930s. The guns that eventually

shelled England were experimental rather than practical weapons. The designers wanted to establish just how far a shell could be fired. In 1918 the notorious 'Paris Gun' had been used to bombard the French capital from German positions 116 km (72 miles) away. In 1938 the German army accepted the K 12 (*Kanone 12 Eisenbahn*) for service: a 210 mm (8.2 inch) gun with a maximum range of 120 km (75 miles).

The German army solved many of the technical difficulties

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



"For four months, those guns made life hell. A constant drizzle of shells all over the beach areas was so regular that we called the gun 'Anzio Annie' (as we thought there was only one)"

US Army sergeant recalling attacks by German K 5 (E)s at Anzio

with the K 12, overcoming many of the problems which had affected the German gunners of 1918. It weighed nearly 300 tonnes, fired a 107.5 kg (237 lb) shell – and cost the army about RM6,000,000 (over £500,000 at 1939 values). That was a lot of money to solve yesterday's problems. Two guns were completed and brought to the Pas de Calais in 1940. While the Luftwaffe began its assault on Britain, the German army joined in, firing right across the English Channel to hit targets in Kent.

LONG-RANGE SHELLING

One shell landed in Rainham, 88 km (55 miles) from France. British experts examined the fragments and concluded that they came from a gun, not a bomb, but it was not until 1945 that the existence of K 12 was known for certain. K 12 used special shells which had ribs to engage the rifling, but the barrels only lasted for 90 rounds, such were the temperatures and pressures involved. The K 12 battery was withdrawn in 1941 and not seen again. However, shells were still exchanged across the straits from time to time. The British used World War I rail guns to fire on the Calais docks, and the German coastal batteries (like the British equipment, mostly old battleship guns) fired back, scoring a hit on at least one occasion: history's largest land-based gun duel!

The fate of K 12 remained a mystery, but in 1944 one thing was much too clear. Nothing the

British or Americans did could protect the beachhead at Anzio from a giant rail gun hidden in the hills. The soldiers dubbed it 'Anzio Annie'. To the Germans it was a K 5 (28 cm *Kanone 5 Eisenbahn*) or 'schlanke Bertha' (slim Bertha), and there were in fact two of them, taking turns to emerge from a railway tunnel on the Rome-Nettuno line.

The K 5 was a brand new design, created by Krupps during the early 1930s and building on their experience from World War I. It was accepted for service by the German army in 1936, and eight were operational by 1940.



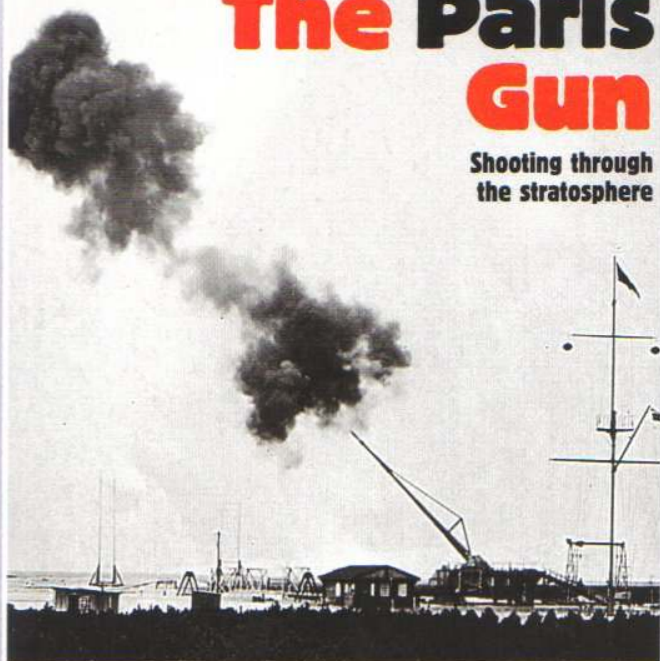
Above and below: Technologically, the 28-cm K 5(E) was one of the finest artillery pieces ever built. Unlike most railway guns it was designed from the start for the role. It was also one of the few artillery pieces of this type to see extensive service in WWII, being used from the Atlantic coast via Italy to the Eastern Front.





The Paris Gun

Shooting through the stratosphere



Above: The Paris Gun is test-fired before being deployed to the front in 1918. A German Navy project, the weapon had a range in excess of 100 kilometres but at a very slow rate of fire.

Railway guns were used by both sides during the Great War. Battleship guns were mounted on specially-built railway cars which could be moved between sectors with relative ease and used to bombard key points like headquarters or rail and road junctions far behind enemy lines.

When Hitler came to power, Britain and France still had a number of these weapons in storage, but the German army had none. Its heavy cannon, including the famous 'Paris Gun', were all lost in 1918.

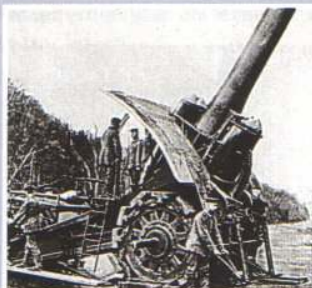
The prodigious range of the 'Paris Gun' had been achieved by lobbing the shell so high it entered the stratosphere. In the thin air at 38,400 metres (126,720 feet), the shells reached their maximum velocity of over 900 metres per second. Slowed by the denser air near ground level, they struck the target at 670 metres per second. But for the shell to reach such altitude required tremendous muzzle velocity: the pressures involved were at the limits of ballistic technology in 1918.

By 1918 of course, aircraft had developed so quickly that the usual targets of the rail guns could be tackled by bombers. Late in the war,

multi-engined aircraft could deliver up to a ton of bombs over greater distances than the largest guns could reach.

But Hitler's generals had other targets in mind when they thought of reviving the railway gun: the concrete fortifications that protected the Czech frontier and the French border from Belgium to Switzerland – the Maginot line.

In 1914 the German advance into Belgium had been opposed by a number of steel and concrete strongpoints, but Krupp's 420 mm super howitzer (known as 'Big Bertha') had made short work of them.



Above: 'Big Bertha' was a Krupp heavy howitzer designed to smash fortifications. Very successful in this role, it inspired the development of even heavier guns in World War II.

Another 20 or so were built over the next couple of years and they remained in action until the end of the war. The last recorded firing took place in 1945 when a gun near Bonn fired on Maastricht.

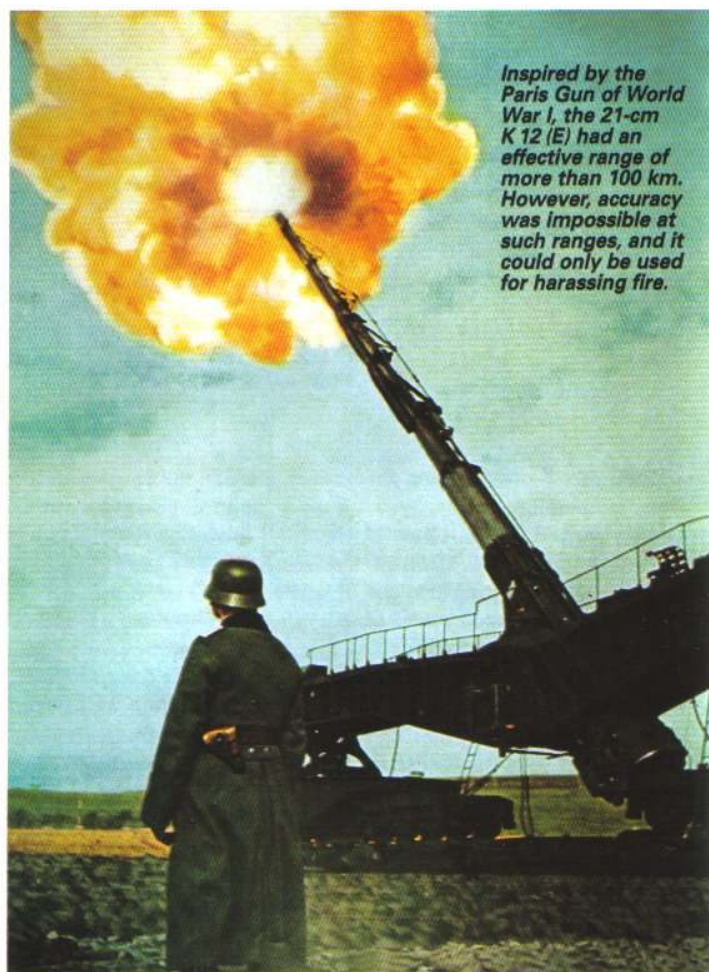
WORKHORSE ON RAILS

Weighing just over 200 tonnes, the K 5 fired a 255 kg (562 lb) shell to a maximum range of 62 km (39 miles). Several K 5s were deployed to guard the Pas de Calais against Allied invasion. Two formed part of the formidable assembly of heavy artillery sent to the Leningrad front in 1942. Hitler refused to order an assault on the city, preferring to let the Luftwaffe bomb it and the army shell it with the heaviest ordnance in the world. The birthplace of Bolshevism would be removed from the map. K 5s pounded away at the city, which was

protected by a number of concrete and steel fortifications and also used battleship guns to retaliate.

One K 5 was involved in the initial bombardment of Stalingrad, and two were earmarked for transfer to Tunisia in late 1942, although their room for manoeuvre there would have been very limited. They were still in Italy when the Axis forces in North Africa surrendered and it was this pair that caused the Anzio beachhead so much misery. Safe from the heaviest bombardment in their deep railway tunnel, they emerged to lob their shells into the densely-packed Allied lines.

The K 5's barrel had 12 deep grooves. The shells had spines on the sidewalls which fitted in the grooves, helping them to achieve muzzle velocities of 1,128 metres per second (3,700 feet/second). To increase the



Inspired by the Paris Gun of World War I, the 21-cm K 12 (E) had an effective range of more than 100 km. However, accuracy was impossible at such ranges, and it could only be used for harassing fire.

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE



K 5's range, a rocket-assisted shell was developed. This had a rocket motor in the forward part of the projectile with the explosive filling packed around the rocket blast pipe, heavily insulated to avoid it detonating from the heat. A time fuse

initiated the rocket motor after 19 seconds' flight, by which time the projectile had reached the highest point in its normal trajectory. At this point, the rocket fired, boosting the projectile still further and increasing its maximum range to

86.5 km (54 miles). The warhead was detonated by an impact fuse inside the shell.

By the end of World War I gunners had learned how to hit a far distant target without the need for ranging shots. If a gun could be positioned accurately enough, it could engage a target correctly marked on a map. In March 1918 a German naval gun put its first round through the roof of a British headquarters far behind the front line. However, the rocket-assisted projectiles proved too inaccurate for 'blind fire' techniques. The best that could be achieved was a rectangle 200 metres wide by 3,400 m long – the shell would fall in that zone, but where within it was a matter of chance.

A second attempt to extend the range of the rail guns began at Germany's secret weapons centre at Peenemunde. In the wind tunnel there an engineer

perfected a 'fin-stabilised discarding sabot' projectile – the same technology used today in the guns fitted to main battle tanks.

The Peenemunde *Pfeil Geschoss* (Arrow Shell) combined a slender arrow-shaped shell with a sabot or outer case of wider diameter fitted with four fins. The sabot functioned as a gas check inside the tube which was a smoothbore. The prototype involved a 310 mm (12.2 inch) calibre barrel firing a 120 mm (4.7 inch) calibre shell 1.9 metres (75 inches) long and weighing 136 kg (300 lb). The combination achieved an amazing muzzle velocity of 1,525 metres/second (5,000 feet/second) and sent the shell a record-breaking 151 km (94 miles). The system even got into service: two smoothbore 28-cm K 5s engaged elements of the US 3rd Army around Maastricht early in 1945.



Above: As a precaution against air attack, the K 12 (E) is moved into a railway tunnel somewhere in northern France.

Railway Guns

Barrel: The K 5 (E) had a 21.5 metre barrel. Because it was slimmer than previous generation railway guns it was nicknamed *schlanke Bertha* ('slender Bertha') by its crews.

Ammunition: The K 5's standard ammunition was a 255.5-kg high-explosive shell fired with a muzzle velocity of 1128 m/sec. A rocket-assisted round was introduced which increased range to over 80 km, and a fin-stabilised round designed to be fired from a smooth-bore barrel was also tested at Peenemunde.

28 cm Kanone 5 (E)

Design of the 28-cm Kanone 5 (Eisenbahn) began at Krupp in 1934, with the first equipment being commissioned in 1936. Over 25 guns were manufactured and saw service all over continental Europe. The complete system weighed 218 tonnes, and had a maximum range of around 60 km.

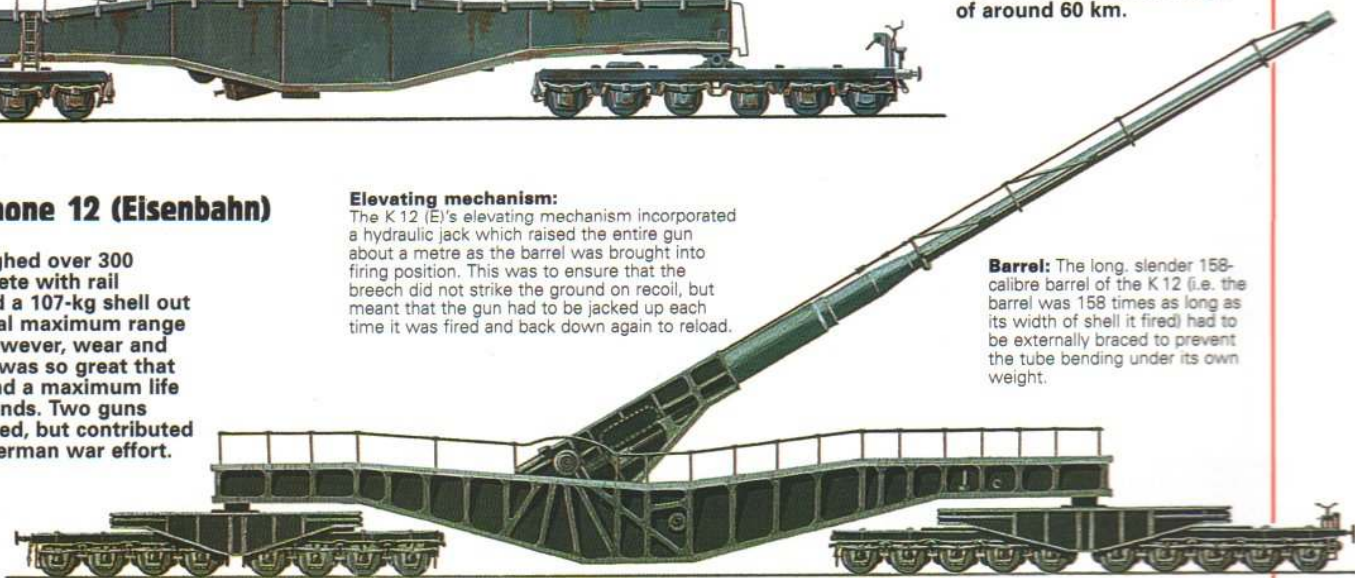
21 cm Kanone 12 (Eisenbahn)

The K 12 weighed over 300 tonnes complete with rail mount. It fired a 107-kg shell out to a theoretical maximum range of 120 km. However, wear and tear on firing was so great that each barrel had a maximum life of only 90 rounds. Two guns were completed, but contributed little to the German war effort.

Elevating mechanism:

The K 12 (E)'s elevating mechanism incorporated a hydraulic jack which raised the entire gun about a metre as the barrel was brought into firing position. This was to ensure that the breech did not strike the ground on recoil, but meant that the gun had to be jacked up each time it was fired and back down again to reload.

Barrel: The long, slender 158-calibre barrel of the K 12 (i.e. the barrel was 158 times as long as its width of shell it fired) had to be externally braced to prevent the tube bending under its own weight.





The Biggest Gun Ever Built



King of all Hitler's railway guns, the leviathan christened 'Gustav' was inspired by Hitler, who asked how big a gun would be needed to knock out the Maginot Line forts. Krupp's engineers set to work in 1937, but it took three years before the first barrel was ready to be test fired, and another two before complete weapons could be assembled. By the time it was ready in 1942, the Maginot Line was rusting far behind German lines. But there were other targets. The British fortress at Gibraltar was one, but the Spanish dictator Franco refused to join Hitler in an attack. Leningrad, under bombardment since the end of 1941, was another. Sevastopol, the Russian naval base on the Black Sea was also under siege and the commander of the German 11th army, *Generaloberst* von Manstein was in a hurry. Already supported by a formidable concentration of bombers, Manstein had amassed a siege train including the 60-cm self-propelled mortar 'Thor'. And in 25 train-loads, 'Gustav' was shipped to join him.

'Gustav' was assembled with the aid of two 110-ton cranes. It took six weeks to lay the track and put the weapon together. At last, on 5 June, 'Gustav' fired its first shots in anger. The targets were coastal batteries that protected the Russian fortress. The fall of shot was reported by a Fieseler Fi-156 Storch spotter plane. Eight rounds later, the fort was silent.

Two types of shell were employed: a 7-ton



Assembling the 80-cm K (E) was a major task. First, more than a kilometre of double track had to be built in a special dug railway cutting, with further service tracks on either side. Then two massive gantry cranes were built, which would be used to assemble the gun. The whole process took between three and six weeks to complete.

80-cm Kanone (E)

SPECIFICATION

80-cm Kanone (Eisenbahn)

Calibre: 80-cm (31.5-in)

Length: 42.976 m (141 ft).

Barrel length: 32.48 m (106 ft 6.7 in)

Weight: 1350 tonnes (1329 tons).

Max elevation: 65 degrees.

Ammunition: 4800-kg high-explosive or 7100-kg concrete-piercing high explosive.

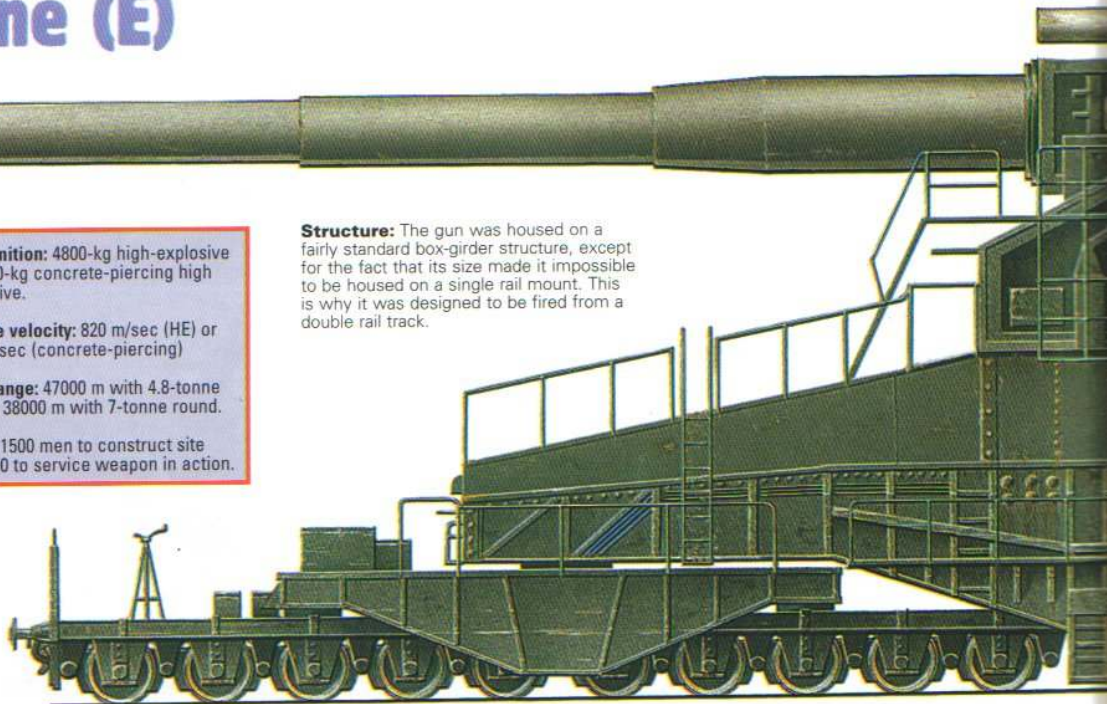
Muzzle velocity: 820 m/sec (HE) or 710 m/sec (concrete-piercing)

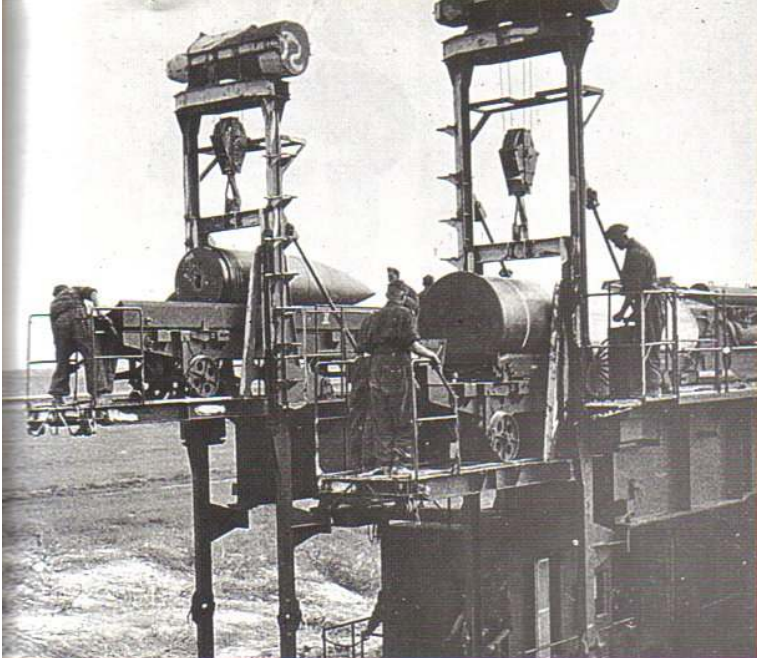
Max range: 47000 m with 4.8-tonne round; 38000 m with 7-tonne round.

Crew: 1500 men to construct site and 500 to service weapon in action.

Structure: The gun was housed on a fairly standard box-girder structure, except for the fact that its size made it impossible to be housed on a single rail mount. This is why it was designed to be fired from a double rail track.

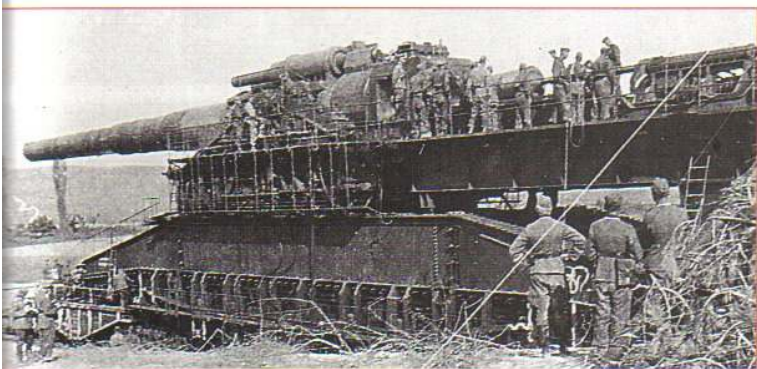
Bogies: The 80-cm gun was mounted on four huge rail bogies. These ran on parallel tracks in pairs, with each pair locked together to form a double unit.





Above: Two powerful ammunition hoists were used on the 80-cm gun, the one on the left lifting the projectile and the other moving the propellant.

Below: A round is rammed into the barrel. It took more than 1,500 men to assemble the gun, and it required a crew of 500 in operation.

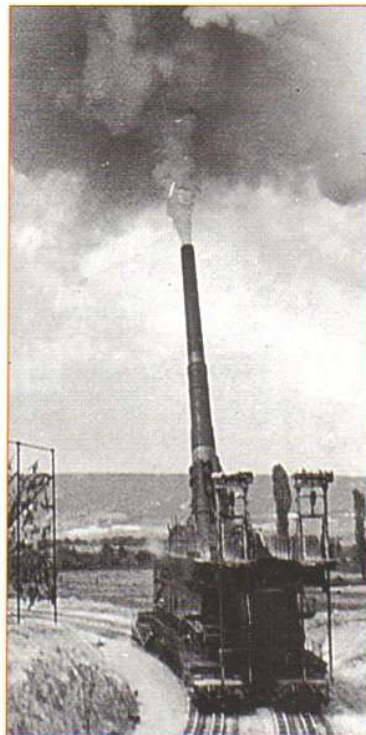


armour-piercing round designed to smash through concrete, and a five-ton high explosive round.

The next day 'Gustav' turned its terminal attention to Fort Molotov. That took seven rounds to destroy, and left time to attack an especially challenging target: the underground (and underwater) magazine dug under Sevastopol and out into Severnaya Bay. Nine rounds were fired, travelling some 25 km before plunging through 30 metres of water and the concrete roof to explode inside. 'Gustav' continued in action all week as von Manstein's siege guns

systematically pulverized every Russian position. However, the defenders still held out and had to be killed inside the labyrinth of tunnels that connected the forts. One by one they were blasted out with satchel charges or burned out with flame-throwers. On 1 July the handful of survivors surrendered.

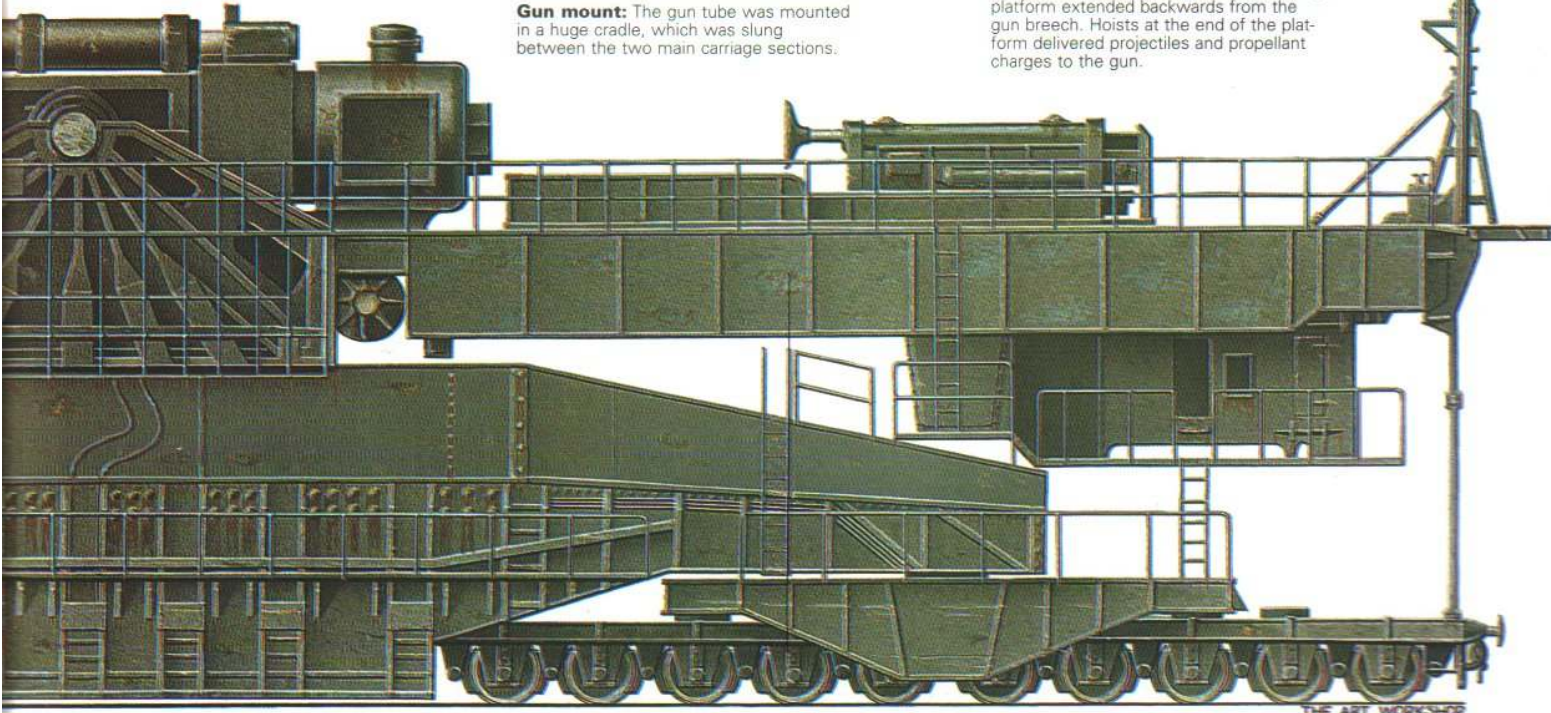
'Gustav' was dismantled and returned to Germany. The siege train was supposed to be re-united in summer 1943 for an all-out attack on Leningrad, but this was intended as the sequel to a successful attack at Kursk. Operation *Zitadelle* failed, and it was the Russians' turn to attack. 'Gustav' does not appear to have been re-assembled. Parts of the 80 cm guns were discovered on trains in 1945, but nothing remains now but a few inert projectiles.



Left: The massive artillery piece fires a round at Sevastopol. In its immensely expensive career, the 80-cm gun had fired around 300 rounds, fewer than 50 of which were in combat.

Gun mount: The gun tube was mounted in a huge cradle, which was slung between the two main carriage sections.

Ammunition handling: A long working platform extended backwards from the gun breech. Hoists at the end of the platform delivered projectiles and propellant charges to the gun.



MEDALS AND ORDERS PART 1

Orders, medals and honour insignia were extremely important symbols in the Third Reich. Easily recognisable, the decorations on a uniform provided an instant history of the wearer.

MEDALS, AWARDS and decorations have always played a significant part in military pageantry. Special badges and insignia are awarded for bravery and achievement, for long service and technical skills, for campaigns and as regimental honours. But in Hitler's Germany they acquired an importance rarely seen in history.

Insignia and awards in the Third Reich were not the preserve of the military alone. The Nazi Party spread its tentacles through every branch of German society, and while its uniforms may have lacked the peacock colours and almost 'ruritanian' style of contemporary Italian designs, the variety of badges, awards, honour weapons and insignia used by the Party was almost infinite.

In addition to military awards from World

Right: Stuka pilot Hans Ulrich Rudel was the most highly decorated German soldier of the war. In 2530 combat missions he destroyed more than 500 Soviet tanks. He was awarded the Knight's Cross with Golden Oakleaves (the only recipient), Swords and Diamonds. His gunner wears the German Cross in Gold.

Right: General Fritz Bayerlein as an Afrika Korps Oberstleutnant. He wears a Knight's Cross, an Iron Cross First Class, a wound badge and a tank assault badge.



NAZI SYMBOLS



War I there were medals, orders, medallions and badges to commemorate special occasions such as the Nuremberg Rallies and the Olympic Games of 1936.

Everyone in any kind of official position wore a distinctive uniform, from the armed forces and the SS through the Party, the Hitler Youth and the SA to the Postal Service, the Fire Service, the Railway Police and the German Red Cross.

With those uniforms they wore equally distinctive rank and unit insignia and decorations, which immediately identified their position in society and within their own organisation. Party symbols were very important, especially those worn by the *Alte Kameraden* who had been part of the struggle since the early days.

MILITARY MEDALS

As with other armed forces, awards were given for courage in the face of the enemy. The most important was the *Eisernes Kreuz* or Iron Cross, awarded in two classes. It is estimated that around five million Second-Class and half a million First Class crosses were awarded during World War II.

For conspicuous gallantry or outstanding leadership in battle, the Führer also instituted a new class of the cross. Only 7,300 examples of the *Ritterkreuz* or Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross were awarded, and holders became instant heroes. The Knight's Cross made provision for repeat awards, with additional grades being denoted by Oakleaves; Oakleaves and Swords; Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds; and (uniquely to Hans Ulrich Rudel) Golden Oakleaves, Swords and Diamonds.

The other military awards most commonly worn were the war and combat badges, awarded to troops who had completed a certain number of assaults or who had been on active service for a specified period of time.



Above: The German Cross was instituted on 28 September 1941. It was awarded for distinction in military leadership, though not in the face of the enemy. Ranking between the Iron Cross and the Knight's Cross, it was awarded in two classes: the German Cross in Gold (seen here, 'Gold' referring to the colour of the wreath) for those already holding the Iron Cross, and the German Cross in Silver for holders of the War Merit Cross First Class.

Left: The Iron Cross was instituted in Prussia in 1813. Awarded for gallantry in the face of the enemy, it has been re-introduced for every Prussian and German War since. Adolf Hitler, a holder of the Iron Cross First Class from World War I, revived the award on 1 September 1939. This is an Iron Cross First Class, complete with case and packaging.

COMBAT AWARDS

Left: Luftwaffe Fallschirmjäger badge, issued to qualified parachutists.

*Below: Luftwaffe pilot's badge, first awarded on 26 March 1936.
Awarded to those successfully completing training as combat pilots.*





IN THE FACE OF THE FOE

Combat badges were important symbols of a fighting man's proficiency at his trade, and when worn they gave a complete picture of the wearer's combat experience.

Most took a similar form: An oak wreath surmounted by an eagle with a swastika in its claws, with a symbol descriptive of the award inside the wreath. The Eagle varied according to the service, since the Army, the Kriegsmarine and the Luftwaffe each had their own versions of the symbol.

Waffen-SS members generally received army decorations, since they were in essence part of the armed forces. The only exception was the anti-partisan badge designed by Himmler and first awarded in January 1944. This had no eagle and incorporated a sun-wheel (circular) swastika, a dagger and a Totenkopf, or death's head.

In general, the badges were of very high quality, though towards the end of the war much cheaper material began to be used in their manufacture.

Above left: Silver Tank Destruction Strip, awarded for the single-handed destruction of an enemy tank. A gold award was also issued, for the solo destruction of five or more tanks.

Above: Silver Close-Combat Clasp, awarded for participation in 30 days of hand-to-hand fighting without armoured support. A Gold clasp was awarded for 50 days of close-quarters combat, with a Bronze award for 15 days of infantry action.

Below: The High Seas Fleet badge was instituted by the Kriegsmarine on 30 April 1941. It was awarded to the crews of battleships and cruisers who completed 12 weeks of active service at sea.

Far left: Luftwaffe Flak Badge. It was awarded to flak crews who achieved 16 qualifying points, four points being awarded for each enemy aircraft brought down by an individual battery and two for aircraft shared by several batteries.

Left: The Infantry Assault badge was awarded to soldiers who had taken part in at least three infantry actions on three separate days.

Below: Originally dating from 1918, the Wound Badge was reinstituted in May 1939. It came in Gold for five or more wounds suffered in combat, Silver (as seen here) for three or four, and Black for one or two.



A Z

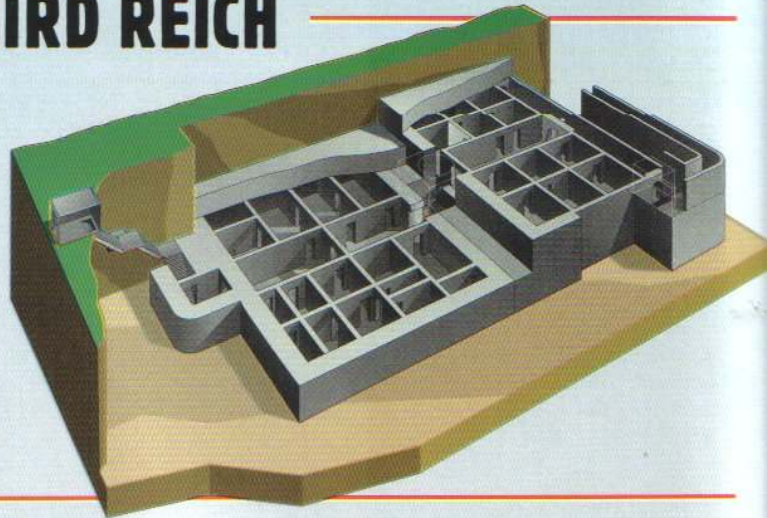
OF THE THIRD REICH

Führerbunker

The underground headquarters close to the Chancellery in Berlin where Hitler spent his last days, in March and April 1945. It was a massive concrete-reinforced bunker on two levels, 20 metres below ground. It was reached by descending a stairway from the butler's pantry in the New Chancellery, and also had access to the Chancellery gardens. The upper floor had a dining area with kitchens, guest rooms and

servants quarters. The lower had 17 rooms, including those of Hitler, Eva Braun and Dr Goebbels. It was in the Führerbunker that Hitler married Eva Braun, and there that they committed suicide on 30 April.

Right: Deep beneath Berlin's streets, the bunker was safe from Allied bombing and Soviet shells. However, it was not safe from the despair of the Nazi leaders.



Führerlexicon

A book published in 1934 which was in effect the Nazi Party 'Who's Who'. The Lexicon gave the names of Nazi fighters,

martyrs, lawyers, industrialists, civil servants and technologists – essential knowledge for anyone wishing to prosper under the new

Nazi state. Absent from its pages was Joachim von Ribbentrop, who at that time was not regarded as important. Though

the book has the names of many very minor figures in the Nazi party, no women feature in it since the leadership was all male.

Führerprinzip

The Führerprinzip or 'Leadership Principle' was a concept basic to the Nazi state. Its outlines were drawn by Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, in which he demanded that the new

Germany must be an authoritarian state with power vested in the leader. He explained that "Every man will have advisers to help him, but the

decision will be made by one man." The Führer stood at the top of a pyramidal structure. According to the NSDAP's Organisation Book, "The Party is

the order of Führers. All Political Leaders stand as appointed by the Führer and are responsible to him. They possess full authority over the lower echelons"

Funk, Walther (1890 – 1960)

A former law student and conservative financial journalist who became Minister of Economics and President of the Reichsbank from 1937 to 1945. Unfit for service in World War I, he became strongly anti-Marxist in the 1920s and was drawn to the Nazis through Gregor Strasser. He joined the party in 1931, and in 1933 became Reich press chief. In 1937 he replaced Dr Hjalmar Schacht as Minister of

Economics. Schacht described him as "a harmless homosexual and alcoholic".

He repented of his actions when tried at Nuremberg, but protested his innocence of major war crimes. Even though he had protected individual Jewish friends, he was also responsible for drafting the 1938 laws which excluded Jews from business, and was implicated in the handling of looted Jewish wealth

Right: A jovial man noted for his piano playing and drinking, Funk was one of the few congenial men in Hitler's otherwise rather dull entourage.

which the SS deposited under the account name of 'Max Heiliger'. By 1945 he was an alcoholic who suffered from venereal disease. He was sentenced to life imprisonment, but was released on health grounds in 1957.



Galen, Clemens graf von (1878 – 1946)

Cardinal-Archbishop of Munster who in 1933 issued a pastoral letter attacking Nazi racial doctrine, and in 1934 published a critique of Rosenberg's 'Myth of the 20th Century'. He was a forthright critic of the Nazi government. In 1941 he publicly denounced the policy of state

euthanasia – 'mercy killing' which was being extensively employed against people with severe mental or physical disabilities. The Cardinal's protest halted the programme and remains the only effective public protest in the Third Reich. Galen was targeted by the Gestapo, and his services

were often interrupted. He was imprisoned briefly in Sachsenhausen concentration camp after the July Bomb Plot of 1944.

Right: Known as the 'Lion of Munster', Cardinal Galen was a thorn in the side of the Nazis.



Galland, General Adolf (1911 - 1996)

Fighter ace and commander of Luftwaffe fighters from 1941 to 1945. Galland joined Lufthansa in 1932 as a commercial pilot. He transferred to the Luftwaffe when it was formed in 1935. Galland fought in the Spanish Civil war, and flew ground attack missions during the Polish campaign. By the time of the Battle of Britain he was flying the Messerschmitt Bf 109 as *kommodore* of JG 26, and was running up an impressive score

of aerial victories. After Werner Mölders, he was the second Luftwaffe pilot to be awarded the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds. On Mölders' death in November 1941 he was appointed commander of the Luftwaffe's fighter arm, and a year later, at the age of the 30, he was promoted *Generalmajor* – the youngest in the German armed forces. Sacked by Goering from his post of General of Fighters in 1945, Galland

returned to front line operations flying the new Me 262 jet fighter. Luftwaffe statisticians credited him with 103 air kills. After the war he had a successful career in commercial aviation.

Right: Adolf Galland's devotion to women, expensive cigars and fine brandy was forgotten in the air, where he became a deadly serious pilot, an innovative and aggressive tactician and one of the Luftwaffe's great leaders.



Gau

The main Nazi territorial unit. After 1930, these roughly corresponded to the old Reichstag electoral districts and civil defence regions. *Gaue* were also set up after 1938 in Austria

and Czechoslovakia, and by the outbreak of war there were 43 – the 43rd being the *Auslands* organisation for overseas Germans which was administered from Berlin by

Gauleiter Ernst Wilhelm Bohle. A Gauleiter (district leader), who was personally appointed by and directly responsible to Hitler, headed each *Gau*.

The *Gau* were divided into

Kreise (circuits), each run by a *Kreisleiter*. *Kreise* were in turn broken down into *Ortsgruppe* (local groups); in cities these were further subdivided into street-level *Zellne* (cells).

Gelb Fall (Plan Yellow)

The code-name for the May 1940 attack on France and the Low Countries which, in effect, reversed the Schlieffen Plan used by the German army of 1914.

Instead of putting the main weight of German forces on the right and driving down through the flatlands of Belgium towards Paris (which is what the Allies

expected and planned against), the decisive stroke would come from the left flank, attacking with powerful armoured concentrations through the hilly,

forested Ardennes. From there, German armoured forces would swing west and north to the Channel coast to isolate the British and French armies.

German-American Bund

The largest of several pro-Nazi organisations set up in the United States in the 1930s. Initially known as the Friends of New Germany, in 1935 it became the German-American Bund. Headed by Fritz Kuhn, it organised camps for its members and their children in New Jersey, and held mass meetings, modelled on Nuremberg Party Days, in New York's Madison Square Garden.

Though Hitler welcomed the establishment of pan-German fascist organisations, he did not actively support the Bund – the Steuben Society, a conservative German-American group, had already warned the Führer that US public opinion was hostile to the activities of overtly fascist groups.

After protests from the US Ambassador in Berlin, the Führer

went further and disavowed Kuhn's organisation. With the German declaration of war on the United States in 1941, Bund members were arrested and its activities ended.

Right: Young Bund members attend roll-call at a New Jersey camp modelled on those of the Hitler Youth.



Gestapo

The *Geheime Staatspolizei* or Secret State Police was universally known – and feared – by the acronym Gestapo. It was tasked with tracking down and eliminating political enemies and dissidents within Germany and resistance organisations in Occupied Europe.

The Gestapo owed its origins to Hermann Goering's period as Minister-President of the Prussian state. Goering converted the Prussian State Police Department 1A (political activities), headed by Rudolf Diels, into the secret police department or *Geheimes Polizei Amt*. In 1934, when

Prussia was absorbed into the Reich, the Gestapo became a national organisation. Diels was replaced by Heinrich Müller and the organisation came under the control of Heinrich Himmler and the SS.

By 1936 the Gestapo had expanded rapidly, and the Berlin headquarters at Prinz Albrechtstrasse 8 became the centre of a vast web of officials, informers and operatives.

In October 1939 the Gestapo was incorporated into Heydrich's integrated security apparatus, becoming Amt IV of the RSHA. Despite being indicted as a

Right: Hermann Goering created the Gestapo, but he had to hand it over to party rival Heinrich Himmler's SS when the Reichsführer became head of all German police organisations.

criminal organisation at Nuremberg, many members of the Gestapo evaded justice, some claiming that they were simply policemen.

See also Hitler's

Issue 2: Reinhard Heydrich

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 3: Gestapo



Gillars, Mildred (1901 - 1988)

American-born 'Axis Sally'. Gillars was a music student at Ohio Wesleyan college, where in 1920 she gained some local notoriety as the first woman student to wear trousers. Dropping out of her American course, she went to Germany to continue her musical studies.

During World War II she broadcast Nazi propaganda to Allied troops, who enjoyed her taste in jazz and popular music and found her propaganda rather amusing. She was arrested in 1945 and served 12 years in a Federal prison, becoming a convent teacher on her release.

Right: Mildred Gillars was having an affair with a German foreign Ministry official at the outbreak of war, and at his suggestion she agreed to work for the Nazis. In 1942 she was based at Tunis, broadcasting to Allied troops in North Africa, by whom she was nicknamed 'Axis Sally'.



Glaube und Schönheit

'Faith and Beauty' was the name given to a voluntary organisation for young women associated with the *Bund Deutscher Mädel* (BDM, or German Girls' League). Established in 1937 by Reich Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach, *Glaube und Schönheit* was intended to develop the spiritual and physical graces of girls between 17 and 21. They received guidance on dress sense, domestic sciences and

preparation for marriage. The *Glaube und Schönheit* handbook for 1943 includes recipes, the birth dates of Nazi heroes, and pictures of von Schirach and of Hitler's mother.

Right: As with all Nazi youth organisations, the BDM closely associated health with fitness. By the time they got into Glaube und Schönheit, however, girls were also trained in domestic duties.



Gleichschaltung

Gleichschaltung was the programme of 'Co-ordination of the Political Will'. It was first mooted by Hitler in March 1933 and called for the Nazification of the German government and

society. By the end of the year *Gleichschaltung* had led to the establishment of a comprehensive set of new state and social institutions under Nazi control. As part of the

programme independent labour unions were dissolved and the Nazi Labour Front established. In June and July seven political parties were dissolved. Perhaps the most important piece of

Gleichschaltung was the Enabling Law that was passed on March 22 which gave Hitler as Chancellor special powers for four years. It was renewed in 1937 for a further four years.

Gleiwitz Raid

The attack on a radio station on the German-Polish border which took place at 7.30 pm on 31 August, 1939. Supposedly perpetrated by 'Polish troops', Hitler used the raid as a pretext for the attack on Poland.

However, it was all a fake, planned by Reinhard Heydrich. The attack was indeed carried out by men in Polish uniforms – but in reality they were a party of SS commandos led by one of

Heydrich's 'dirty tricks' specialists, Alfred Helmut Naujocks. They beat up the radio station staff, made a brief broadcast urging Poland to attack Germany and fled leaving behind as evidence the body of one of their group. This corpse was in fact that of an inmate of a concentration camp, who had been selected as part of an operation called 'Canned Goods' and shot on site by the raiders.

Right: Gleiwitz, known today as Gliwice in Poland, was in 1939 a German border town in Upper Silesia. Heydrich briefed Naujocks on the proposed operation to seize the radio station in the town on August 10. The SD head added that Germany would be at war with Poland within days



See also Hitler's Battles
Issue 1: Blitzkrieg Poland

Globocnik, Odilo (1900 - 1945)

Born in Trieste, Odilo Globocnik was an early Austrian member of the Nazi Party. A builder by trade, he was an ill-educated thug who had fled to Germany in 1933 after murdering a jeweller. Appointed Gauleiter of Vienna after the Anschluss in 1938, he was again in trouble a year later, when he was dismissed for currency speculation. However, with the outbreak of war he was again on the rise, this time within the SS.

As an SS-Brigadeführer, he was police chief in Lublin, where in 1941 Himmler gave him command of 'Operation Reinhardt', the elimination of Poland's Jews. Globocnik was responsible for the establishment of the extermination camps at Belzec, Maidanek, Sobibor and Treblinka. Arrested by Allied troops in Austria in May 1945, he committed suicide before being brought to trial.

Right: Globocnik was of Croatian descent. In his role as head of the extermination camps in Poland, he proved brutally efficient in organising the genocidal slaughter of Polish Jews.

See also The Holocaust
Issue 7: Concentration Camps
See also A-to-Z
Issue 1: Anschluss



Goebbels, Paul Joseph (1897 - 1945)

Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Party's intellectual and propaganda expert, was born into a devoutly Catholic Rhineland family. He was rejected by the Army in World War I because of his dwarfish height and a foot crippled in childhood. Goebbels was very bright, and gained a doctorate from Heidelberg in 1921.

Goebbels worked in journalism before being drawn to the nascent Nazi Party. Originally an opponent of Hitler, he became a follower of the Führer in 1926, when he was made Gauleiter of Berlin. He entered the Reichstag in 1928.

He had studied American journalism and advertising techniques and used these to great effect in the run up to power in 1933, after which he was made *Reichsminister für Volkserklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda).

Joseph Goebbels was a fluent and powerful orator and after the disaster at Stalingrad worked hard to rebuild national morale. In 1944 his organisational skills, along with those of Albert Speer equipped Germany with sufficient men and weapons to launch the

Right: Joseph Goebbels was one of the few members of the Nazi hierarchy who was seen in public once the war started to turn against Germany.

Ardennes offensive. He was passionately loyal to Hitler and remained in the bunker in Berlin to the end, poisoning his family and committing suicide after Hitler's death.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 15: Propaganda

See also Hitler's Henchmen

Issue 5: Joseph Goebbels



Goerdeler, Carl Friedrich (1884 - 1945)

Jurist and former Mayor of Leipzig who had been an economics adviser to the Government when the Nazis came to power. He resigned in 1935. Goerdeler was a senior civilian conspirator in the July 1944 plot against Hitler – he would have been Chancellor in the plotters' provisional government.

A man of almost puritanical ideals, Goerdeler nevertheless hoped that Germany would retain her ill-gotten territories even after Hitler's death. Following the failure of the bomb attack he was denounced and arrested in August and after a trial before a People's Court was sentenced and executed at Plötzensee Prison in February 1945.

Right: Highly respected by government officials, diplomats and industrialists, Goerdeler was picked by the conspirators to head the Government had Hitler been killed. He is seen here being tried by Roland Freisler and the People's Court.

See also Inside the Third Reich

Issue 20: Hitler's opponents



Goering, Carin (1888 - 1931)

Hermann Goering's first wife. Carin von Fock-Kantzow was already unhappily married when she met Goering in her native Sweden in the early 1920s. The young flier made an immediate impression, and after Carin amicably divorced Count von Kantzow the couple married in November 1922. Both became followers of Hitler after hearing the Führer speak, and Carin nursed Hermann back to health

after he was wounded in the Beerhall Putsch, though she herself was ill.

On their return to Germany in 1928, Carin acted as hostess to her husband's rising political star. The darkly attractive and politically aware Swedish aristocrat was one of the few women with whom Hitler was at ease.

Carin contracted tuberculosis and after a long period of illness

Right: Daughter of a Swedish officer father and an English mystic mother, Carin von Fock-Kantzow captivated the young Hermann Goering during his exile in Sweden.

died on 17 October, 1931. Goering was crushed by the death and had her interred at his palatial estate at Schorfheide, north of Berlin which he renamed Karin hall.



Goering, Emmy (1893 - 1973)

Divorcée Emmy Sonnemann had been a well-known actress before becoming the second Frau Goering on 10 April, 1935. She was nothing like her predecessor, being large and abundantly healthy. The wedding was the greatest social event of the Third Reich, combining Christian and Nazi-pagan ritual. Since Hitler was unmarried, Emmy Goering became the first lady of the Third Reich, organising the social scene in Berlin and at Berchtesgaden. After the war she was banned

from practising her skills as an actress since she was listed as a senior member of the Nazi hierarchy. Her daughter Edda was named after Mussolini's daughter.

Right: The April 1935 marriage of Hermann Goering and Emmy Sonnemann was celebrated as a hugely ostentatious state occasion. The new Frau Goering was a sturdy, healthy woman, contrasting greatly with her delicate, mystical predecessor.



Goering, Herman Wilhelm (1893 - 1946)

In his time, Herman Goering was second only to Hitler in the Nazi hierarchy. During World War I he served as a fighter pilot, scoring 22 kills and winning the coveted *Pour le Merite*. A flamboyant figure of considerable charm, he joined the new Nazi Party in 1923. Wounded in the Beer Hall Putsch in 1923 his treatment for these injuries and recurrent arthritis made him a morphia addict.

When the Nazis came to power he held various positions but his role as *Reichsmarschall* and

Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe made him an international figure. The early successes of the air force made him very popular, but as the air war turned against Germany he became more withdrawn and self-indulgent.

Goering used his position as head of the Nazi four-year plan to amass vast wealth, and he was one of the most enthusiastic looters of Europe's art treasures. Following his capture by the Americans, the combination of drug withdrawal and prison food

meant that he was able to conduct a vigorous, if futile defence at Nuremberg. He was condemned as a war criminal but cheated the gallows the day before his execution on 15 October, 1946 by taking cyanide which may have been smuggled in by his wife Emmy.

Right: Hermann Goering poses before his second wedding in 1935. At this time, he was probably the second most powerful man in Germany, after the Führer he followed slavishly.



KMS Graf Spee

German 'pocket battleship' named after the naval hero of World War I, Graf Maximilian von Spee. It was a very heavily armed heavy cruiser, its nickname coming about because it carried six 28-cm (11-inch) guns in place of 20.3-cm guns more usual in ships of this size. Weight was kept low by using welding in place of riveting for its construction, and diesel engines gave the ship long range in her real role, which was commerce raiding.

In theory, the pocket battleships were fast enough to run away from anything bigger than they

were, and armed heavily enough to deal with anything fast enough to catch them.

However, following a running battle with three smaller British cruisers – HMS *Ajax*, *Achilles* and *Exeter* – on 13 December, 1939 the *Graf Spee* was forced to take shelter in neutral Montevideo in Uruguay. On 17 December, she left harbour and on Hitler's orders was scuttled and sunk in the estuary of the River Plate.

See also Hitler's battles
Issue 2: Battle of the River Plate



Above: The German 'pocket battleship' Admiral Graf Spee was designed primarily as a commerce raider. The Graf Spee was in position in the South Atlantic, ready to take action the moment war broke out.

Greim, Robert Ritter von (1892 - 1945)

The last man to be promoted to Field Marshal by Hitler, Robert Ritter von Greim had been awarded the *Pour le Merite* as a high-scoring fighter pilot in World War I. After leading *Fliegerkorps V* during the Battle of Britain, he spent much of the rest of the war on the Eastern Front, where he rose to the rank of *Generaloberst* in command of *Luftflotte 6*.

Summoned to Berlin on 24 April 1945, he flew into the city in a tiny Fieseler Storch, accompanied by test pilot Hanna Reitsch. Von Greim was injured in the process, but was nevertheless appointed head of the Luftwaffe to replace Goering – the fat *Reichsmarschall's* suggestion that he should take over the Reich had infuriated Hitler. The newly promoted *Generalfeldmarschall* von Greim

was able to fly out under artillery fire with instructions for those Nazi leaders who were free and could still be reached. Greim was captured by the Americans in Bavaria. He committed suicide in May 1945.

Right: After the Battle of Britain, Robert Ritter von Greim spent most of the war commanding an air fleet on the Eastern Front.



Grese, Irma (1921 - 1946)

A concentration camp guard variously named the 'Belle of Auschwitz,' 'Angel of Death' and 'Blonde Angel of Hell.'

After working on a farm, she became a 19-year-old *aufseherin* (overseer) at Ravensbrück concentration camp. At 22 Grese was placed in charge of 18,000 female prisoners at Auschwitz, moving on to Belsen in the final months of the war. She was described by some of her victims

as very beautiful, while others remembered her as a plump blonde.

Grese had a reputation for sadistic beatings, using a walking stick or the riding whip she often carried. She also had a macabre interest in the medical experiments conducted at the camp. She was tried as a war criminal, condemned to death and dragged screaming to the gallows.

Right: Irma Grese was a none-too-bright farm girl who threw herself whole-heartedly into her job as a concentration camp overseer, being remembered by surviving prisoners as an extreme sadist.

See also The Holocaust
Issue 6: Belsen
See also Nazi Horrors
Issue 9: Ravensbrück



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THE HOLOCAUST

Into the
Ghetto



HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Martin Bormann
Rudolf Hess

HITLER'S BATTLES 8

North Africa

INSIDE THE REICH

Hitler Youth:
Creating a Nazi Future



HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Early Panzers
Infantry weapons
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NAZI HORRORS

Ravensbrück:
The women's camp

NAZI SYMBOLS

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INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

German opposition to Hitler



A-TO-Z OF THE THIRD REICH



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Hitler claimed that his was a solo road to power.

In truth, his rise was only possible with the assistance of a wide variety of people

HOLOCAUST

The Nazis made clear their intentions towards the Jews with the racist Nuremberg laws, introduced in 1934.

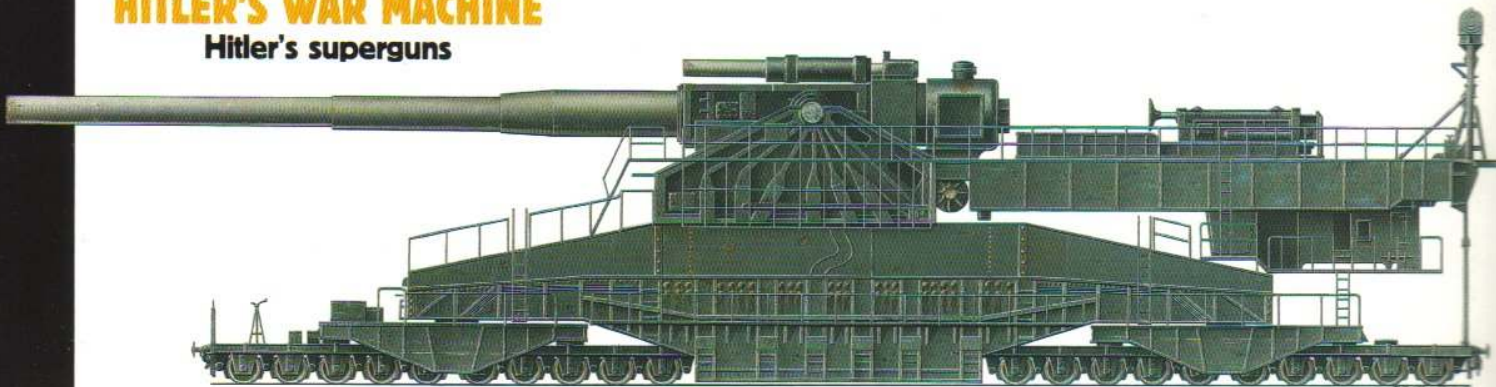


HITLER'S BATTLES

Germany's attack on the strategic Mediterranean Island of Crete saw the world's first airborne invasion.

HITLER'S WAR MACHINE

Hitler's superguns



INSIDE THE THIRD REICH: HITLER'S HENCHMEN

Erwin Rommel, one of Germany's greatest soldiers, was a loyal follower of Hitler who had a change of heart – and died for it.

INSIDE THE THIRD REICH

The black-shirted fanatics of the SS aimed to create an Aryan state within a state, answerable only to the Führer.



NAZI SYMBOLS

Military orders and combat awards.